A TREATISE OF Delighting IN GOD:

From *PSAL.* xxxvij. 4.

Delight thy ſelf alſo in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the Deſires of thine heart.

In Two Parts.

By *John Howe*, M. A. ſometime Fellow of *Magdalen* College, *Oxon.*

LONDON:

Printed by *A. Maxwell*, for *Sa. Gellibrand*, at the Ball in St. *Pauls* Church-yard, 1674.

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The Rev. John Howe was a learned English Nonconformist Minister, who died in 1705. aged 75. Dr. Doddridge says of Howe, "He seems to have understood the Gospel as well as any uninspired Writer, and to have imbibed as much of its spirit. The truest sublime is to be found in his Writings, and a vast variety of uncommon thoughts. On the whole he is one of the most valuable writers in our language

and I believe in the World."

1488 aa 4.

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To my much valued Friends, The Magiſtrates and other Inhabitants of *Great-Torrington* in *Devon*, with the ſeveral Worthy and Religious Perſons and Families of my acquaintance in thoſe Parts.

IT *is likely that the Title of the following Treatiſe will put many of you (my dearly eſteemed Friends) in mind, that ſundry Sermons were preach't twenty years ago among you upon this Subject. I had it indeed in deſign, to have given you ſome abſtract of thoſe Sermons; But ſearching among my Papers, could find none but ſo imperfect and broken Memorials as would be of little uſe for that purpoſe. And yet being deſirous to preſent you with ſomewhat that might both be a teſtimony of my affection, and an advantage to you: And knowing this Subject was grateful to many, and affords what may be uſeful to all of you; I have for your ſakes, applied my ſelf to a re-conſideration of it. Few paſſages or expreſſions, probably, will occur to you that you heard before; yet you will find the ſubſtance of the Doctrine the ſame: As from ſo plain a Text, it could not well but be, whoſoever ſhould have had the handling of it. The* First Part *is even altogether new, except the introductive ſuppoſitions in the beginning. Nor do I remember I then had more than one Diſcourſe to you on that Subject, before the practical application of it. The* other Part *contains many things formerly delivered to you, though perhaps not in the ſame order, much leſs in the ſame words,*

whereto the ſhort Notes in my hands could no way inable me.

The matter here treated of, is the very Subſtance of Religion; The firſt *and the* laſt; *The* root *and the* flower; *Both the* baſis *and* foundation, *and the* top *and* perfection *of* Practical Godlineſs; *And which runs through the whole of it. Nor knew I therefore what to preſent you with, that could have in it a fitter mixture and temperament of what might be both uſeful and pleaſant to you.*

As there is therefore no need, ſo nor do I deſire you ſhould receive the matter *here diſcours'd of,* meerly *for my ſake; there being ſo great reaſon, it ſhould be chiefly acceptable on higher accounts. I do very well underſtand your affection to me; and could eaſily be copious in the expreſſion of mine to you, if I would open that Sluce: But I do herein reſolvedly, and upon conſideration reſtrain my ſelf; Apprehending, that in ſome caſes (and I may ſuppoſe it poſſible that in our caſe) a gradual mortification ought to be endeavoured of ſuch affection as is often between thoſe ſo related as you and I have been. Which is no harder ſuppoſition, than that ſuch affection may be exceſſive and ſwell beyond due bounds: So it would, if it ſhould be accompanied with impatient reſentments towards any Providence or Inſtrument, whereby it finds it ſelf croſſed, or from whence it meets with what is ungrateful to it: If it prove turbulent and diſquieting to them in whom it is, or any others: Or if it occaſion a looking back with diſtempered lingerings after ſuch former things as could be but means to our great End, with the neglect of looking forward to that End it ſelf ſtill before us. Far be it from me, to aim at the keeping any thing alive that ought to dye; that is, in that degree wherein it ought ſo to do.*

But

But our mutual affection will be both innocent and uſeful, if it be ſutable to mortal objects, and to perſons not expecting the converſe we have had together any more in this world. If alſo in the mean time it preſerve to us a mutual intereſt in each others prayers. If it diſpoſe us to ſuch acts and apprehenſions of kindneſs as our preſent circumſtances can admit. And if, particularly, as it hath moved me to undertake, it may contribute any thing *to your acceptance of this ſmall labour, which is now deſigned for you. The* ſubject *and* ſubſtance *whereof, as they are none of mine, ſo they ought to be welcome to you, for their own ſake, and His who is the prime Author, though they were recommended to you by the hand of a ſtranger, or one whoſe face you never ſaw.*

They aim at the promoting of the ſame End which the courſe of my poor labours among you did, (as He that knoweth all things knoweth), The ſerious practice of the great things of Religion, *which are known and leaſt liable to queſtion; without deſigning to engage you to or againſt any party of them that differ about circumſtantial matters. They tend to let you ſee, that Formality in any way of Religion, unaccompanied with Life, will not ſerve your turn, (as it will no mans); Than which, there is nothing more empty, ſapleſs, and void both of profit and delight.*

I have reflected and conſidered with ſome ſatisfaction, that this hath been my way and the temper of my mind among you. Great reaſon I have to repent, that I have not with greater earneſtneſs preſt upon you the known and important things wherein ſerious Chriſtians do generally agree: But I repent not I have been ſo little engag'd in the hot conteſts of our age, about the things wherein they differ. For, as I pretend to little light in theſe things (whence I could not have

much confidence to fortifie me unto ſuch an undertaking); *ſo I muſt profeſs to have little inclination to contend about matters of that kind.*

Nor yet am I indifferent as to thoſe ſmaller things, that I cannot diſcern to be in their own nature ſo. But though I cannot avoid to think that courſe right which I have deliberately choſen therein, I do yet eſteem that but a ſmall thing upon which to ground an opinion of my excelling them that think otherwiſe, as if I knew more than they. For I have often recounted thus ſeriouſly with my ſelf, That of every differing Party (in thoſe circumſtantial matters) I do particularly know ſome perſons by whom I find my ſelf much excelled in far greater things than is the matter of that difference. I cannot ('tis true) thereupon ſay and think every thing that they do; which is impoſſible, ſince they differ from one another as well as me. And I underſtand well, there are other Meaſures of Truth than this or that excellent Perſons Opinion: But I thereupon reckon I have little reaſon to be conceited of any advantage I have of ſuch in point of knowledg, (even as little as he ſhould have, that can Sing, or Play well on a Lute, of him that knows how to Command Armies, or Govern a Kingdom); And can with the leſs confidence differ from them, or contend with them. Being thereby, though I cannot find *that I err in theſe matters, conſtrain'd to* have ſome ſuſpicion *leſt I do; and to admit it poſſible enough, That ſome of them who differ from me, having much more light in greater matters, may have ſo in theſe alſo. Beſides, that I moſt ſeriouſly think, Humility, Charity and Patience, would more contribute to the compoſing of theſe leſſer Differences, or to the good eſtate of the Chriſtian Intereſt under them, than the moſt fervent Diſputes and Conteſtations. I have upon ſuch con-*

conſiderations little concern'd my ſelf in contending for one way or another, while I was among you; or in cenſuring ſuch as have differed from me, in ſuch Notions and Practices as might conſiſt with our common great End; or as imported not manifeſt hoſtility thereto. Contenting my ſelf to follow the courſe that to my (preponderating) judgment ſeemed beſt, without ſtepping out of my way to juſtle others.

But I cannot be ſo patient of their practical diſagreement, *(not only with all ſerious Chriſtians, but even their own Judgments and Conſciences alſo)*, who have no Delight in God, *and* who take no pleaſure in the very ſubſtance of Religion.

I have been grieved to obſerve, That the caſe hath too apparently ſeemed ſo, with ſome among you: Some have been openly profane and diſſolute, and expreſſed more Contempt of God *(which you know was often inſiſted on the one part of the day* *, *when I had* this ſubject *in hand the other)* than Delight in him. *I know not how the caſe may be altered with ſuch ſince I left you; or what bleſſing may have followed the endeavours of any other hand: Death I am ſure will be making alterations, as I have heard it hath. If theſe lines may be beforehand with it, may they be effectually monitory to any ſuch that yet ſurvive! That however this or that* external form of godlineſs *may conſiſt with your everlaſting well-being*, real ungodlineſs *and the* denial of the power *never can; which* power *ſtands in nothing more than in* love to God, *or* delight in him. *Therefore ſeriouſly bethink your ſelves*, Do you delight in God or no? If you do, *methinks you ſhould have ſome perception of it. Surely if you delight in a friend, or ſome other outward comfort, you can perceive it. But* if you do not, *What do you think* alienation from the life of God *will*

* From *Pſal.* 10. 13.

come

come to at laſt? It is time for you to pray, and cry, and ſtrive earneſtly for a renewed heart. And if any of you do in ſome degree find this, yet many degrees are ſtill lacking. You cannot delight in God, but upon that apprehenſion as will give you to ſee, you do it not enough: Therefore reach forth to what is ſtill before. I bow my knees for you all that a living delightful Religion may flouriſh in your hearts and families, in the ſtead of thoſe dry, wither'd things, worldlineſs, formality, *and* ſtrife about trifles. *Which will make* Torrington *an* Heph-zibah, *a place to be delighted in; your Country a pleaſant Region: And (if he may but hear of it) add not a little to the ſatisfaction and delight of*

Antrim,
Sept. 1.
1674.

Your affectionate Servant in
Chriſt, who moſt ſeriouſly deſires your true proſperity,

John Howe.

IF there be any thing of miſtake, or defectiveneſs, found in this *Scheme*; let it not be charged upon the accurate *Author*, who lives at a very great diſtance from the preſs, and knows nothing of it: but upon one who was willing to help the *Reader*, by giving him a ſhort View of this Excellent *Work*, which for the *matter*, *contrivance*, *ſpirit* and *manly Eloquence* of it, may commend it ſelf (above the vulgar eſtimate) unto the *ingenuous*; who upon a diſtinct reading of it all through with ſeriouſneſs, cannot but deſire a review, and be glad eaſily to find out the Page where ſome remarkable thing did more eſpecially affect his heart, that he may refreſh himſelf again and again with it. Others may perhaps from a glance at the ſweetneſs and variety of theſe Contents, be invited to feed heartily upon the *Book* it ſelf; Which if they do, no doubt but they will experimentally atteſt it to be in its proportion very agreeable to the *Subject* it treats upon, truly *Delectable*.

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A

TREATISE

OF

Delighting in GOD:

From PSAL. 37. 4.

Delight thy ſelf alſo in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſires of thine heart.

PART I.

Shewing the Import of this Precept.

THIS *Pſalm*, by the Contents of it, ſeems to ſuppoſe,

An afflicted ſtate of *good men*, by the oppreſſion of ſuch as were (in that and other reſpects) *very wicked.*

The proſperity of theſe *wicked ones* in their oppreſſive courſe.

An aptneſs in the *oppreſſed* to impatience under the *evils* they ſuffered.

A diſpoſition to behold, with a lingering and an envious eye, the *good things* which their oppreſſors enjoyed, and themſelves wanted.

Hence the compoſure of it is ſuch as might be moſt agreeable to theſe ſuppoſitions, and ſerviceable to the fortifying of the Righteous againſt the *ſin* and *trouble* which ſuch a ſtate of things might prove the occaſion of unto them.

This Verſe hath a more direct aſpect on the laſt of theſe caſes, or on this laſt mentioned thing conſiderable in the caſe, of Upright men ſuffering under the oppreſſion of violent and proſperous wickedneſs, *viz.* That they might hereupon be apt both to *covet* and *envy* the *worldly delights* of their enemies; To be deſirous of their dainties, and grudg they ſhould be *theirs*, who, they knew, deſerved worſe things: And while themſelves alſo felt the preſſure of worſe, which at their hands they deſerved not.

What is here offered to the conſideration of the ſufferers, tends aptly to allay their diſcontent, to check and repreſs their inordinate deſire towards inferior things; or to divert and turn it another way; as in caſe of bleeding to exceſs and danger, the way is to open a Vein, and ſtop the courſe of that profuſion by altering it.

As if it had been ſaid, "You have no ſuch "cauſe to look with diſpleaſure or immode-"rate deſire upon their delicacies; You may "have better, Better belong to you, and in-"vite you, The Lord himſelf is your por-"tion; It becomes both your ſtate and ſpirit, "to apply your ſelves to an holy delight in "him; To let your Souls looſe, and ſet them

at

"at liberty, to ſatiate themſelves, and feed un-
"to fulneſs upon thoſe undefiled and ſatisfy-
"ing pleaſures unto which you have a right;
"and in which you will find the loſs and want
"of *their* meaner enjoyments abundantly made
"up unto you. You have your natural de-
"ſires and cravings as well as other men; and
"thoſe may be too apt to exceed their juſt
"bounds and meaſures; But if you take this
"courſe, they will ſoon become ſober and
"moderate, ſuch as will be ſatisfied with what
"is competent, with an indifferent allowance
"of the good things of this earth. And to-
"wards the Lord, let them be as vaſt and
"large as can be ſuppoſed, they can never be
"larger than the Rule will allow; nor than
"the object will ſatisfie. The direction and
"obligation of the former being indeed pro-
"portioned to the immenſe and boundleſs ful-
"neſs of the latter.

We need not operouſly inquire what ſort of perſons this direction is given unto. It is plain, that it's the common duty of all *to delight in God.* But it cannot be the immediate duty of all. Men that know not God, and are enemies to him, have ſomewhat elſe to do firſt. They to whom the Precept is directly meant, are the regenerate (the *righteous* and the *upright*, as the Pſalm it ſelf doth plainly deſign them) or *his own people.*

The moſt profitable way of conſidering theſe words, will be chiefly to inſiſt on the *direction* given in the former part of the Verſe. And then to ſhew towards the cloſe, how the

event promiſed in the latter part, will not only by virtue of the Promiſe, but even naturally follow thereupon.

The Direction in the former part, gives us *a plain ſignification of Gods good pleaſure, that he himſelf would be the great object of his peoples delight.* Or, *it is his will, that they principally delight themſelves in him.*

Our diſcourſe upon this Subject will fall naturally into two parts:

The { Former / Latter } whereof will concern the { *Import* / *Practice* } of the enjoined Delighting in God.

(Under which latter, what will be ſaid of the latter part of the Verſe will fitly fall in).

That we may more diſtinctly open the import and meaning of *Delighting in God*; It will be neceſſary that we treat,

1. *Of the Delectable Object.*
2. *Of the Delight to be taken therein.*

I. As to the former, The general object of Delight is *ſome good*, or ſomewhat ſo conceived of; with the addition of being *apprehended ſome way preſent. Here* it is the *cheif and beſt good.* The higheſt and moſt perfect excellency. Which goodneſs and excellency conſidered as reſiding in God, gives us a twofold notion or view of the object, whereupon this delight may have it's exerciſe.

Abſo-

{ Abſolute.
{ Relative.

1. God may be lookt upon in an *abſolute conſideration*, as he is in himſelf the *beſt and moſt excellent Being*; wherein we behold the concurrence of all perfections; The moſt amiable and beauteous excellencies, to an intellectual eye, that it can have any apprehenſion of.

2. *In a Relative, viz.* As his Goodneſs and Excellency are conſidered, not meerly as they are in himſelf, but alſo as having ſomeway an aſpect on his creatures. For conſidering him as in himſelf the *moſt excellent Being*; If here we give our thoughts liberty of exerciſing themſelves, we ſhall ſoon find, that hereupon he muſt be conſidered alſo as *the firſt Being*, the Original and Author of all other Beings; Otherwiſe he were not the moſt excellent.

From whence we will ſee, *Relation* doth ariſe between him and his creatures that have there Being from him.

And beſides the *general relations* which he beareth to them all, as the common Maker, Suſtainer, and Diſpoſer of them; Obſerving that there are ſome which by their *reaſonable natures*, are capable of *Goverment by him* (in the proper ſenſe, *viz.* by a Law) and of *bleſſedneſs in him.*

To theſe we conſider him as ſtanding in

a twofold reference, in both which we are to eye and act towards him, *viz.*

As a { *Lord*, to be obey'd. / *Portion*, to be enjoy'd.

And have moſt delectable excellencies to take notice of in him (that require we ſhould ſutably comport with them), anſwerable peculiarly to each of theſe conſiderations, in reſpect whereof we are to look upon him;

1. As the *moſt excellent Lord*; moſt delectably excellent (we take not here that title ſo ſtrictly, as to intend by it meer *propriety* or *dominion*; But as to ordinary apprehenſion it is more commonly underſtood to ſignify alſo *governing Power*, or *Authority* founded in the other) whom we cannot but eſteem worthy of all poſſible honour and Glory; that every knee bow to him, and every tongue confeſs to him, that univerſal homage, ſubjection and adoration be given him for ever.

2. *As the moſt excellent Portion*, in whom all things that may render him ſuch do concur and meet together; all deſirable and imaginable riches and fulneſs, together with large bounty, flowing goodneſs every way correſpondent to the wants and cravings of indigent and thirſty Souls.

The *former notion* of him intimates to us our obligation of duty to him: The *latter* prompts to an expectation of benefit from him.

But now becauſe by the apoſtacy we have

injur'd

injur'd his right in us, *as our Lord*; *forfeited* our own right in him, as *our portion*; and loſt our *immediate capacity* or diſpoſition both to *ſerve* and *injoy* him: This great breach between him and us was not otherwiſe to be made up but by a Mediator. Unto which office and undertaking, his own Son, incarnate, the Word made Fleſh (being only fit) was deſigned. By him, dealing between both the diſtanced Parties, ſatisfying the Juſtice of God, overcoming the enmity of man, the difference (ſo far as the efficacy of his Mediation doth extend) is compoſed. And *to the reconciled*, God becomes again their acknowledg'd both Lord and Portion. His right is vindicated, theirs is reſtored; and both are eſtabliſhed upon new grounds, added to thoſe upon which they ſtood before. And ſo, as that now our actings towards God, and expectations from him, muſt be through the Mediator.

Whereupon this object of our delight, *conſidered relatively unto us*, is intirely *God in Chriſt*,--- *Being reconciled*,---*We joy in God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom &c.* Rom. 5.10 11.

In theſe ſeveral ways that have been thus briefly mentioned, may God come under our conſideration. Nor are they, any of them, unapplicable or impertinent to our purpoſe, when we would deſign him the object of our delight. Yea, and ſurely God conſidered each of theſe ways ought to be lookt on by us, as a moſt *delectable object*.

For it is pleaſant to contemplate him, even *moſt abſolutely conſidered*, as the moſt excel-

lent Being, when we behold his glorious excellencies in themſelves; that is (not with the denial, but) without the actual preſent conſideration of any advantage that may redound to us from them. As we are apt to find our ſelves pleaſed and gratifi'd in viewing an excellent object (ſuppoſe a ſtately Edifice, or beautiful Flower), from which we expect no other benefit.

Again, If we conſider him *relatively*, 1. In the former capacity *of a Lord*, it is grateful *to behold him* deckt with Majeſty, array'd in Glory, cloth'd with Righteouſneſs, arm'd with Power, ſhining in Holineſs, and guiding himſelf with Wiſdom and Counſel in all his adminiſtrations. Yea, and it is delightful to *obey him*; while we are moſt fully ſatisfy'd of his unexceptionable right to *command us*. For there is a great pleaſure naturally ariſing to a well-tempered ſpirit, from the apprehended congruity or *fitneſs of things*, as that *he* ſhould *command*, and that *we* ſhould *obey*. His *right*, and our *obligation*, being ſo undoubtedly clear and great. Eſpecially when we alſo conſider *what he commands*, and find it is no hard bondage; that they are not grievous commands which he requires we be ſubject to; but ſuch, in the keeping whereof *there is great reward*; And that *his ways are all pleaſantneſs and peace*.

And being conſidered as a *Portion*, the matter is plain, That ſo rich and abounding fulneſs, where alſo there is ſo communicative an inclination, cannot but recommend him a moſt ſatisfying object of delight.

And

And thus we are more principally to conſider him, *viz.* rather *relatively* than *abſolutely*; and that relatedneſs (which the ſtate of the caſe requires) as now anew ſetled in Chriſt. And *ſo*, though it be very delightful to look upon him, *as one that may, and is ready to become related to us*, (as he is to any that will conſent and agree with him upon the Mediators terms): Yet it adds unſpeakably to the pleaſantneſs of this object, when we can reflect upon ſuch characters in our ſelves, as from whence we may regularly conclude, that he is actually thus related *unto us*. That is, that we have conſented; That our relation to him immediately ariſes from the *Covenant of life and peace*; That he hath entered into Covenant with us, and ſo we are become his.

It is pleaſant thus to behold and ſerve him as [*our*] *Lord*. How great is the emphaſis of theſe words, *I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledg of Chriſt Jeſus* [*my Lord!*]. To conſider not only how well he deſerves the acknowledgments and ſubjection of all; But alſo to find our ſelves under the choſen and gentle bonds of perpetual ſervice, and devotedneſs to him, is certainly matter of very high delight and pleaſure.

But how infinitely delightful is it, to view and enjoy him *as* [*our*] *Portion*!

And this ſeems very pertinent to the deſign of this Scripture; which aiming to recal and draw in the hearts of godly Perſons from

from too earneſt, and from envious lingerings after the enjoyments of worldly men (their enemies and oppreſſors), propounds what may be an over-ballance to the (imagined) felicity of their ſtate; And wherein they ſhould more than equal them *in point of injoyment.*

And ſhould we ſingle out this, as the object to be conſidered, *God as a portion.* That it might be more diſtinctly repreſented, we ſhould have two things to take notice of, that would render it moſt delectable, and ſuch as wherein holy hearts may acquieſce, and reſt with fulleſt ſatisfaction.

The { Sufficiency / Communicableneſs } of it.

1. *The Sufficiency of it.* Which cannot but be every way compleat and full; it being the *all-comprehenſive good*, which is this portion. *God all-Sufficient.*

The moſt eminent and known Attributes of his Being; wherein by any iſſues of them they can be communicated, having an ingrediency and concurrence to the happineſs of his people therein.

2. The *Communicableneſs thereof.* Which proceeds from his bounty, more peculiarly, and his gracious inclination to do good, and make his boundleſs fulneſs overflow to the repleniſhing of thirſty longing Souls, whom firſt it had allured and cauſed ſo to long. But though

though the ſcope and order of the diſcourſe in this Pſalm, did not directly ſeem to import more than a deſign of calling off the perſons here ſpoken to, from one ſort of enjoyment to another, from a meaner and more empty to a better: Yet it is to be conſidered, that *true* (and the *beſt*) *injoyment*, cannot be unaccompanied with duty; and that God is not otherwiſe to be injoyed, than as he is obeyed; nor indeed are the notions of him, as a *Lord to be obeyed*, and as *a good to be injoyed*, intirely diſtinct; but are interwoven, and do run into one another. We obey him, even in injoying him; It being part of our injoyned duty, to ſet our hearts upon him, as our beſt and higheſt good. And we injoy him in obeying him. The advantage and benefit of his government, being a real and moſt momentous part of that good which we injoy from him, and in him. He is our *Benefactor* even as he is our *Ruler*; and is therein our Ruler, as he propoſes to us benefits, which he thereby binds us to accept; for even his *invitations* and *offers*, are alſo *laws* and formal *bonds* of *duty* upon us.

Yea, and even the *act of delight it ſelf* pitcht upon him, is an *act of homage*, as there will be occaſion hereafter to take notice.

Wherefore it will be fit to ſteer a larger courſe, than meerly to conſider him as a good commenſurate to our *partial appetites*. Which are apt to preſcribe to, and limit our apprehenſions to this or that particular ſort of good, and tincture them with ſuch a no-

tion

tion of delight, as which, if it be not falſe and groſly carnal, may yet be much too narrow and unproportionable to the univerſal, all-comprehending good: And though we ſhall not here go beyond the compaſs of delectable good; yet as there is no good (truly ſo called) which is not in, or from the *firſt goodneſs*; So indeed, nor is there any capable of being gathered up into that ſum which is not *delectable.*

Nor therefore *can the uſual diſtribution* of *goodneſs* into *profitable*, *honeſt*, and *pleaſant*, bear a ſtrict teſt. Only the falſe reliſhes of vitiated appetite in this corrupted *ſtate* of man, have given ground for it. Otherwiſe to a mind and will that is not diſtempered, the account would be much otherwiſe. To a *prudent mind*, profitable good would be pleaſant, even as it's profitable. To a *juſt and generous mind*, honeſt comely good would be pleaſant, even as it is honeſt. Nor would there need another diſtinction, but into the *goodneſs of the end*, which is *pleaſant for it ſelf*, and the goodneſs of the means, which is pleaſant as it is *honeſtly and decently profitable*, (and otherwiſe it cannot be) thereunto.

That we may here therefore with the more advantage ſtate the *delectable good*, we are now to conſider, It will be requiſite to premiſe two things.

1. *That all delightful injoyment of God, ſuppoſes ſome communication from him.* Nothing can delight us, or be injoy'd by us; whereof we

we do not, ſome way, or by ſome faculty or other, *partake ſomewhat.* Either by our external ſenſe, ſenſitive appetite, phanſie, memory, mind, will; and either in an higher, or lower degree, for a longer or a ſhorter time, according as the delight is, for kind, degree, or continuance which is taken therein. This is plain in it ſelf. And in the preſent caſe therefore of delighting in God or enjoying him, ſome *communication*, or participation there muſt be one way or other according as the injoyment of him is. And as the caſe with man now is, it is neceſſary he do with cleareſt and the moſt penetrative light and power, come in upon his mind and heart, ſcatter darkneſs, remove prejudice, aboliſh former reliſhes, transfuſe his own ſweet ſavor through the Soul. Proportionably therefore, to what is to be done, he communicates himſelf, as the event conſtantly ſhews, with all them that are ever brought to any real injoyment of him.

For we plainly ſee, that the *ſame divine communication which* being received, doth delight and ſatisfy, doth alſo procure, that it may be deſired and received; makes its own way, attempers and frames the Soul to it ſelf; and gives it the ſweet reliſh and ſavor thereof, *wherein God is actually injoyed.*

2. That however *God himſelf*, is truly ſaid to be injoyed or delighted in by holy Souls; yet *this communication* is alſo a ſort of *mediate object* of this delight or injoyment. Theſe things being fore-laid, It is now needful to

to

to inquire ſomewhat more diſtinctly, what that *communication* or *communicable good is*, which is the *immediate matter* of proper ſpiritual injoyment unto holy men in this world. Becauſe many have that phraſe of Speech [*injoying God*] often in their mouths, that well underſtand not what they mean by it; Yea even divers of them that *have real injoyment of him*; Unto whom, though they poſſibly *taſte* the thing which they cannot *expreſs* or *form* diſtinct conceptions of; it might be ſomewhat their advantage to have it more cleared up to their apprehenſion, *what* it is that they immediately injoy, when they are ſaid to injoy God; or by what *he* is to be injoyed?

It is not a meer fancy (as too many profanely think, and are too apt to ſpeak) that is the *thing to be injoyed.* There have been thoſe, who, comparing their own experience with Gods promiſes, and precepts (the rule by which he imports and according whereto men are to expect his gracious influence) were capable of avowing it, rationally, to be ſome very ſubſtantial thing they have had the injoyment of. The ſobriety of their ſpirits, the regularity of their workings, their gracious compoſure, the meekneſs, humility, denial of ſelf, the ſenſible refreſhing, the mighty ſtrength and vigour which hath accompanied ſuch enjoyments, ſufficiently proving to them that they did not hug an empty cloud, or embrace a ſhadow, under the name of injoying God. Such expreſſions as we find in the

the book of *Pſalms* (the 16. and many other) with ſundry parts of Scripture beſides, leave us not without Inſtance: That import nothing like flaſhy and flaunting bombaſt, no appearance of affectation, no pompous ſhew of vain-glory, no ſemblance of ſwelling words of vanity, but which diſcover a moſt equal orderly well-poys'd temper of mind, in conjunction with the higheſt delight and well-pleaſedneſs in God. That rich and unimitable fulneſs of living ſence, could not but be from the apprehenſion of *a real ſomewhat*, and that, of *a moſt excellent nature and kind*, whatſoever be the *notion*, that may be moſt fitly put upon it.

Nor yet is it the *meer eſſence of God* which men can be ſaid to *enjoy*. For that is not communicated nor communicable. *Injoyment* ſuppoſes *poſſeſſion*. But it would be a ſtrange Language to ſay we poſſeſs the Eſſence of God otherwiſe than *relatively*; which is not enough unto actual enjoyment. His meer *eſſential preſence* is not enough. That renders him not injoy'd by any, for that is equally with all and every where; But all cannot be ſaid to enjoy him.

As therefore it is a *real*, ſo there muſt be ſome *ſpecial* communication, by which, being received, we are truly ſaid to injoy him.

A *ſpecial good* it muſt be, not ſuch as is common to all. For there is a communication from him that is of that extent, in as much as all live and move and have there Beings in him and the whole earth is full of his goodneſs.

This

This is *a Good* peculiar to them that are *born of God.* And ſuted to the apprehenſion and ſenſe of that *divine Creature* which is ſo born.

What this *Good* is, how fully ſufficient it is, and how or which way it is communicable, may be the better underſtood when we have conſidered what are the *wants and cravings* of *this Creature*, or of them in whom it is formed and wrought. For when we have pitch'd upon the very thing it ſelf, *which they moſt deſire*, (and which they can tell *is it*, when they hear it named, though their thoughts are not ſo well formed about it as to give it the right Name before) we ſhall then underſtand it to be both what will be *ſufficient to Satisfie*, and what *may be communicated* to that purpoſe.

But now before that *new birth* take place in the ſpirit of man, it *wants* but knows not what; craves indeterminately (*who will ſhew us any good?*) not fixing upon any particular one that is ſufficient and *finite*, and laboring at once, under an ignorance of the *infinite*; together with a diſaffection thereunto. Its wants and cravings are beyond the meaſure, of all *finite good*; for ſuppoſe it to have never ſo large a ſhare, nay could it graſp and ingroſs the whole of it, an unſatisfiedneſs and deſire of more would ſtill remain. But *that more* is ſomewhat indeterminate, and meerly imaginary. An infinite nothing. An idol of fancy. A God of its own making. God it muſt have, but what a one he is it miſapprehends

hends, and wherein it rightly apprehends him likes and loves him not; will by no means chooſe, deſire, or take complacency in him. So that an unregenerate ſoul is, while it is ſuch, neceſſarily doom'd to be miſerable. It *cannot* be happy in any *inferior good*, and in the *Supream*, it *will not*.

What the *real wants and juſt cravings* of a mans ſpirit therefore are, is not to be underſtood by conſidering it in that ſtate.

And if the work of the *new creature* were perfected in it, it would want and crave no more; But were ſatisfy'd fully and at perfect reſt. Nor is that ſtate ſo known to us as yet.

Therefore *they* are beſt to be diſcerned in the ſtate wherein that worke is *begun* and hitherto *unfiniſhed*. In which it therefore deſires rightly, and ſtill continues to deſire. A ſtate of intermingled motion and reſt; wherein *delight* is imperfect, and allay'd by the continual mixture of yet-unſatisfy'd deſire. And yet it may be collected *what* it is that would be *Sufficient* to ſatisfy; becauſe their deſire is ſtill determined to *one thing*, is not vagrant, wanders not after things of another kind, but is intent only upon more of the ſame. Pſal. 27.4.

Now let it be enquired of ſuch a one what that thing is. We are generally told there, * *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the dayes of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord, &c.* And it may be many would

more ſhortly tell you it is *God* they deſire, whence it would only be concluded it is God they aim to enjoy or delight in. But becauſe this brings us but where we were; Let it be further enquired, what then is your buſineſs with God, or what would you have of him? It is not, ſure, to *be God* that you expect or ſeek, or to enjoy God in that ſence wherein he poſſeſſes and enjoys himſelf. No, not by any means. It is then *ſome communication from God, diverſe from what all men have* (for *that* they do not find *apt* to ſatisfy) which they deſire and crave. And what is that? Tis ſomewhat, as *poſſible to be apprehended*, and as *diſtinguiſhable* both from his incommunicable Being, and his ſo generally communicated Bounty towards all. As if the enquiry were, *What it is that I deſire really to enjoy when I deſire to enjoy a friend?* (*viz.* as the notion of *a friend* or *friendſhip* doth moſt properly import). That is neither to deſire the *impoſſible thing*, of poſſeſſing his Being as my own; Nor the *unſatisfying thing*, the meer partaking ſome part of his external goods and wealth; whereof it may be he daily imparts ſomewhat to every beggar at at his door. But it is to have his *intimate acquaintance*, his counſel and advice, the advantage of improving my ſelf by his converſe, and of conforming my ſelf to his example in his imitable perfections; The aſſurances of his faithful conſtant love and friendſhip, in reference to all future emergencies. A friend is really to be enjoyed in ſuch things as theſe.

And

And in *ſuch-like* is God to be enjoyed alſo; But with this difference, that Gods communications are more immediate, more conſtant, more powerful and efficacious, more delightful infinitely and ſatisfying, in reſpect both of the good communicated, and the way of communication.

In ſhort then, the wants and deſires of a renewed ſoul, the ſupply and ſatisfaction whereof it ſeeks from God, would be ſumm'd up in theſe things.

That it may know him more fully, Or have clearer apprehenſions of him.

That it may become like to him, and framed more perfectly after his own holy image.

That it may be aſcertain'd of his love and good will, that he hath thoſe favorable inclinations towards it, which ſhall certainly infer his doing all that for it which its real neceſſities (to be eſtimated by his infinite Wiſdom) *can call for.*

Theſe are the things, *in kind*, which would ſatisfy it. And anſwerably to theſe we may conceive the *communicable good* which is the immediate object of their enjoyment. So that, as God himſelf is the *object which* is enjoyed; This is the *object by which*, or in reſpect whereof he is injoyable.

Therefore the divine communication, or that which is communicated from God to regenerate ſouls wherein they are to delight themſelves, contains in it,

1. *An inwardly enlightening revelation of himſelf to them*, that they may know him 1.

more diſtinctly. This is a part of the one thing, would be ſo highly ſatisfying, and de-
Joh. 14. lightful. *Shew us the father and it ſufficeth us.* When their deſires are towards God only, it is with this aim in the firſt place, *that they may know him*, which is ſuppoſed, when that is given as an encouragement to the purſuit
Hoſ. 6. of this knowledg. *We ſhall know if we follow on to know the Lord.* As if it had been ſaid; This is a thing not doubted of but taken for granted, that *we would fain know the Lord*; we ſhall, if we follow on, *&c.* This is a dictate of pure and primitive nature to covet the knowledg of our own orignal, *him* from whom we and all things ſprang. Men are herein become moſt *unnaturally* wicked when
Rom. 1. *they like not to retain God in their knowledg.*

The new and divine nature once imparted, that is, *primitive nature* renewed and reſtored to it ſelf, revives the deſire of this knowledg. And in compliance with the preſent exigencie of the caſe hath this inclination ingrafted into it, to know him (as he is now only to be comfortably known)
1 Cor. 2. viz. *in the Mediator. I determined to know nothing among you* (ſaith S. Paul) *but Jeſus Chriſt, &c. i.e.* to glory in, to make ſhew of, to diſcover my ſelf taken with no other knowledg than this, or with none ſo much as this. To which purpoſe, he elſewhere profeſſes to
Phil. 3. *count all things loſs for the excellency of this knowledg.* So vehemently did deſire work this way. And proportionably as it is apprehended deſirable, muſt it be eſteemed delightful

ful alſo. Nor are we here to think that this deſired knowledg was intended finally to terminate in the Mediator, for that the very notion of Mediator reſiſts. The name *Chriſt* is the proper name of that office, and the deſire of knowing him under that name imports a deſire to know him *in his office.* viz. as one that is to lead us to God, and reſtore our acquaintance with him, which was not to be recovered upon other terms. So that it is *ultimately* the *knowledg of God* that is the ſo much deſired thing, and of *Chriſt*, as the way and our conductor to God. That is, the knowledg of God not *abſolutely* conſidered alone, (though he is, even ſo, a very delectable object (as hath been ſaid); But as he is *related to us*, and from whom we have great expectations, *our all* being comprehended in him. It cannot but be very delightful (anſwerably to a certain ſort of delectation of which we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak in its proper place) to have him *before our eyes* repreſented and revealed to us, *as the all-comprehending good*, and that (in the way and method whereinto things are now caſt) *may*, at leaſt, become our portion. He is ſome way, to be enjoyed even in this *view.* 'Tis a thing apt to infer complacency and delight thus to look upon him. They who place felicity in contemplation, eſpecially in the contemplation of God, are not beſides the mark; If they do not circumſcribe and confine it there, ſo as to make it ſtand in *meer contemplation*, or in an idle, and vainly curious view of ſo

glorious an object, without any further concern about it. They will *then* be found to ſpeak very agreeably to the language of holy ſcripture which ſo frequently expreſſes the bleſſedneſs of the other ſtate by *ſeeing God.*

And if the act of viſion be delicious, The repreſentation of the object muſt have proportionable matter of delight in it. It cannot but have ſo, if we conſider the nature of this repreſentation;

Which, anſwerably to the ſenſible want and deſire of ſuch as ſhall be delighted there-with, muſt have ſomewhat more in it than the *common appearances* of God which offer themſelves equally to the view of all men. Though it is their own *as common fault*, that they are deſtitute of the more grateful and neceſſary additions.

That it hath *more* in it, is evident from Gods own way of ſpeaking of it. For we find that his *revealing himſelf* in this delectable way,

Eph. 1. 17. 1. *Is attributed to the ſpirit.* And as a work to be done by it *when it ſhall be given* (ſuppoſing it therefore *yet not given* and that all have it not) yea that *ſuch* have it not, in ſuch a meaſure as they may have it, unto this purpoſe; who yet *truly have it*, in ſome meaſure
v. 13. already; even as a thing peculiar to them from the unbelieving world. For it is prayed for to ſuch as concerning whom it is ſaid *that after*
v. 13. *they believed* (not before) *they were ſealed by the ſpirit of promiſe, that the God of our Lord*
v. 17. *Jeſus Chriſt the father of glory would give*

it

it them; and it is mentioned by a name and title proper to the end and purpoſe for which it is deſired to be given them, viz. *as the ſpirit of Wiſdom and Revelation*, that end and purpoſe being immediately expreſt *in* or (as that particle is ſome time uſed) [*for*] *the knowledg of him.* The eyes of their underſtanding being enlightened by it (which are ſuppoſed blind before) for the ſame purpoſe. By which prayer it is ſuppoſed a communicable thing; Yea and that theſe had ſome way *a right* to the communication of it, or that it was a thing proper to their ſtate, fit to be prayed for, as ſome way belonging to them, they being in a more immediate capacity of ſuch revelation than others. v. 18.

But how incongruous had it been with ſuch ſolemnity of addreſs to make requeſt on their behalf for that which they already *ſufficiently* had as a thing common to all men.

2. It is ſpoken of as a reward of their former love, loyalty, and obedience. *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf to him.* Therefore is ſuch manifeſtation no more to be accounted common, than the love of Chriſt is and keeping his commandments. Joh. 14.21

It is ſpoken of as given diſcriminatingly, and the grace of God admired upon that account. In the next words, *Judas ſaith unto him*, (not *Iſcariot*, it being well underſtood how little covetous he was of, or qualifyed v. 22.

for ſuch manifeſtations) *Lord how is it, that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf to us, and not to the world?*

What it hath more than common light, external or internal, anſwerable to the deeply reſented wants, and the hearts deſires of the regenerate, by which it becomes ſo highly pleaſant and delectable to them, though it is rather to be felt than told (as it is hard to deſcribe the *very things* we have only immediate ſenſible perception of) may yet in ſome degree be underſtood by ſuch characters as theſe.

1. *It is much more diſtinct and clear.* They *are confuſed and dark glimmerings* which other men have of the bleſſed God, ſo that *the light which is in them is darkneſs.* 'Tis true that an unregenerate perſon may poſſibly have clearer *acquired* notions of God, and of the things of God, than thoſe may be *which are of the ſame kind only* in ſome who are regenerate. So that he may, by the advantages he may have above ſome of the other, in reſpect of better natural abilities, more liberal education, ſuch circumſtances of his condition as may more engage him to ſtudy and contemplation and befriend him therein, be capable of finding out more, of making fuller diſcoveries, and more evident deductions, and be able to diſcourſe thence, more rationally and ſatisfyingly to others, even concerning God, his nature, attributes and works, than ſome very pious perſons deſtitute of thoſe advantages may be able to do.

Mat. 6.

do. But *theſe* though their candle give a dimmer light, than the others, have the beams of a Sun raying in upon them, that much outſhines the others candle. And though they know not ſo many things, nor diſcern the connexions of things ſo throughly; yet as they do know what is moſt neceſſary to be known, ſo what they do know, they know better, and with a more excellent ſort of knowledg; proportionably as whatſoever is originally, and immediately divine, cannot but much excel that which is meerly human.

Thoſe do but blunder in the dark, *Theſe, in Gods own light do ſee light.* And his light puts a brighter hue and aſpect upon the ſame things, than any other repreſentation can put upon them. Things are by it repreſented to the life, which to others carry with them but a faint and languid appearance; and are all covered over with nothing elſe but dark and dusky ſhadow, ſo as that may be *hid from the wiſe and prudent which is revealed to babes.* How bright and glorious things, are divine wiſdom, love, holineſs, to an enlightened mind! which is therefore ſuppoſed to have a clearer diſcovery of them. Pſal. 26. Mat. 11.

But it may be ſaid; Is there any thing apprehenſible concerning theſe or any other matters which may not be expreſſed in ſome propoſition or other. And what propoſition is there which a regenerate perſon can aſſent to, but one who is not regenerate may aſſent to it alſo? what definition, ſo truly expreſſive of the natures of theſe things, can be thought,

of

of unto which a carnal mind may not give its approbation? what can be ſaid or conceived ſo fully aud truly tending to deſcribe and *clear* them up but an unrenewed underſtanding may have the repreſentation of the ſame truth, ſo as to give entertainment to it?

'Tis anſwered there are many things, to which *ſomewhat may belong* not capable of deſcription, and whereof we have yet a moſt certain perception. As the different reliſhes of the things we taſte. There are no words that will expreſs thoſe many peculiarities. And as to the preſent matter; There is ſomewhat belonging to the things of God (thoſe for inſtance that were mentioned, his wiſdom, holineſs &c.) beſides the Truth of the conceptions that may be formed about them; which is more clearly apprehenſible to *a divinely enlightened* underſtanding than to one that is not ſo. As,

1. *The beauty of thoſe Truths*; which it is moſt delightful to behold, Their lively ſparkling luſtre, by which they appear ſo amiable and lovely, to a well-tempered ſpirit; as to tranſport it with pleaſure and raviſh it from it ſelf into union with them. There was ſomewhat elſe apprehenſible no doubt, and apprehended by them, the inward ſentiments of whoſe ſouls thoſe words ſo defectively ſerved to expreſs, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods, who is like thee, glorious in holineſs! &c.* beſides *the meer truth* of any propoſitions that thoſe words can be reſolved into. And ſo in thoſe, *O the depth*

of

of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledg of God! &c. And thoſe, *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that,* &c. Or thoſe, *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, That Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners, whereof I am chief.* Or the ſtrains of that rapturous prayer,--*That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthned with might by his Spirit in the inner man. That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: And to know the love of Chriſt, that paſſeth knowledg, that ye might be filled with all the fulneſs of God.*

There is a certain acceptableneſs in ſome Truths (neceſſary to their being received in the love thereof), which is peculiarly ſo repreſented to ſome, as that their apprehenſion is clear and vivid, beyond that of other men; who, however they have the repreſentation of the *ſame things*, yet have not the *ſame repreſentation*; Though, if they be things of neceſſary and common concernment, it is (as was ſaid) their own fault that they have it not. And to have yet clearer apprehenſions of this ſort, is what the renewed Soul doth moſt earneſtly crave, and would be proportionably delighted with.

2. *The tendency of ſuch Truths*, is much more clearly conceivable to an holy Soul, than another; what their ſcope and aim or aſpect is, which way they look, and what they

they drive at, or lead to. I mean not what other *truth* they are connected with, and would aptly tend to infer; But what design God hath upon us in revealing them, and what impression they ought to make upon us. To the ignorance or disregard of which tendency and design of Gods revelation, it is to be attributed, that many have long the same notions of things hovering in their minds, without ever reflecting with any displeasure upon the so vastly unsutable temper of their spirits thereto. They know it may be such things concerning God, the tendency whereof is to draw their hearts into union with him, to transform them into his likeness, to inflame them with his love. But they still remain notwithstanding at the greatest distance, most unsutable, averse, coldly affected towards him, yea utterly opposite and disaffected; and fall not out with themselves upon this account, have no quarrel nor dislike, take not any distaste at themselves for it. They take no notice of an incongruity and unfitness in the ill temper of their own spirits; but seem as if they thought all were very well with them, nothing amiss; and apprehend not a repugnancy in their habitual dispositions towards God to their notions of him.

For a vicious prejudice blinds their eyes, their corrupt inclinations and rotten hearts send up a malignant dark and clammy fog and vapour, and cast so black a cloud upon these bright things, that their tendency and design is not perceived. That prejudice not being

being conceived ſo much againſt the *abſtract notions* of the things themſelves, (whence *they* are entertained with leſs reluctancy) but only againſt the deſign and ſcope of them. Againſt which poyſonous cloud Gods own glorious revelation directs its beams, diſſolves its groſs conſiſtency, ſcatters its darkneſs, as to them to whom he by ſpecial grace affords it. Whereupon, obſerving any remainders of the ſame diſtemper in their ſpirits (though it be in a conſiderable degree abated and leſſened) they are aſhamed of themſelves for it, fill'd with confuſion, yea and indignation; do loath and abhor, and could even be ready, if it were poſſible, to run away from themſelves. And what is the reaſon of this ſo great difference? Surely ſomewhat appears diſcernible to theſe in Gods revelation of himſelf, which to the other doth not. They have then before their eyes a more clear proſpect of the aim and ſcope of it. Which, ſo far as they have it, pleaſes them (for they like the deſign well), only they are diſpleaſed at themſelves, that they comport no more with it. And as the end therefore aimed at is deſirable to them, and would be delightful (as will be ſhewn in its proper place), ſo is it to have that repreſentation immediately offered to the view of their Souls, which hath ſo apt and comely an aſpect thereon, not meerly for its own ſake, but for the ſake of the end it ſelf.

Wherefore there is ſomewhat to be apprehended by Gods repreſentation of himſelf

ſelf to the minds of this regenerate people, at leaſt *more clearly* than by other men. Whence the work of regenerating or converting them
Act. 26. 18. it ſelf, is expreſſed *by opening their eyes.* For the divine communication makes its own way, and enters at the eye, the Souls *ſeeing faculty*, which it doth find (as opening the eyes imports) and not *now create*: But finding it vitiated, and as to any right ſeeing of God, ſhut and cloſed up, it heals, opens, and reſtores it as it enters. It is expreſſed, *By turning them from darkneſs*, to light; *And from the power of Satan*, (the Prince of that Darkneſs, the God of this World; who had blinded their eyes---) *unto God.* Which (becauſe they cannot turn and move towards God blindfold, and that this opening their eyes is in order to their turning to God) implies, that their eyes were ſo diſtempered, blinded, and ſealed up, *cheifly towards him*; So that, though they could ſee other things, *him* they could not ſee; but he was *inviſible* to their *intellectual*, as well as their bodily eyes. Hence alſo is that *underſtanding* ſaid *to be given* (*i.e.* as rectify'd and renewed) by which we *know God*; which implies it to be (wherein it is now given) ſomewhat ſuperadded to the whole natural being and powers of the human Soul, as in its preſent corrupted ſtate,--- *He hath given*
1 Joh. 5. 20. *us an underſtanding to know him that is true.* And that *given rectitude* of underſtanding is is by ſuch a communication from God, as hath that *aptitude* and *power* in it to infer ſo happy a change. The ſame renewing-work

is

is alſo ſaid to be *a calling of men out of darkneſs into his marvelous light.* As if they were brought by it into a new world, wherein they found themſelves beſet with wonders, and all things were ſurpriſing to them. To which purpoſe is that prayer of the *Pſalmiſt* (out of a juſt conſciouſneſs, that this work was not perfect in him, but might yet admit great additional degrees), *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.* He ſuppoſed many undiſcovered wonders, which *more open eyes* might yet behold in that external revelation of Gods mind, which was then afforded (and which was wont in thoſe days to go under the name of *his Law*, though it contained Hiſtories, Prophecies, and Promiſes, as well as Precepts) although he was no ſtranger to thoſe records, nor little inſighted into them, he yet apprehended a need of more light and better eyes; which he therefore deſires. Not that God would cauſe a new revelation to be written, (though that he vouchſafed to do, and partly by himſelf, but that he might learn more out of that already extant; and that the wonderful things *contained in it* might be made more clear to him. Nor can we ſuppoſe him, herein, to deſire to be gratified and delighted by the communication of an incommunicable thing.

1 Pet. 2.

Pſal. 119.

2. *It is more powerfully aſſuring*, and ſuch as is apt to beget *a more certain operative belief* of the things revealed. That is, being added to the means of Faith men may be ſuppoſed to have had before, it adds much to their *aſſurance* of the ſame things, ſo as to make it efficacious

cacious upon their ſpirits. And as well cures the doubtfulneſs, irreſolution, and way-wardneſs of their minds and hearts, as the confuſion and darkneſs of them.

It is very poſſible thoſe things may be diſtinctly underſtood, which the more we underſtand, the more we disbeleive them through their apprehended inconſiſtency with themſelves or ſome certain truth. The delectable things of God, his own diſcovery procures at once, by one and the ſame radiation of light, both to be *clearly underſtood*, and *effectually believed.* Others have the *word of faith* without the *ſpirit of faith.* The faith therefore which they have is a carcaſe; Not *a weak* only (which imports but diminiſhed power) but *a dead thing.* And which hath no power at all to determine the ſoul and compoſe it to that delightful reſt which ſuch things, duly believed, would certainly infer. The moſt delectable truths of God and ſuch as moſt directly tend (in this apoſtate lapſed ſtate of man) to give us the ſweet and refreſhing reliſhes of a juſt and rational joy and pleaſure, are ſuch as are contained in the Goſpel of Chriſt. The things that concern our reconciliation, friendſhip and communion with God in him. And which are therefore wholly of immediately divine and ſupernatural revelation, and to be received by faith. Therefore *one* Apoſtle prayes for ſome they might
Rom. 15. 3. be filled with *joy and peace* [*in believing*].
1 Pet. 1. 8. And *another* ſays of others *that* [*believing*] *they rejoyced with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.*

glory. The external Revelation in the Goſpel is *an apt means*, to beget that Faith (which it is ſaid *comes by hearing*): But the very notion of *means* importing what intervenes to the effect, between *that* and the Principal Agent, neceſſarily ſuppoſes ſuch an Agent. And that what is *only means*, cannot work the effect alone. That Agent, *viz.* (in this caſe) *God himſelf*, or the Spirit, beſides the means which he uſes, and makes effectual, muſt have *his own influence* whereby he makes them ſo. If a pen be a fit means or inſtrument to write with, it doth not therefore follow, that it can write alone, without an hand to move and guide it, in order whereto a motive and directive influence is imparted. In the preſent caſe, The influence is *the inward enlightening overpow'ring communication*, whereof we ſpeak. The efficacy whereof is ſuch, as to give the Soul that peaceful reſt *in believing*, which is alſo moſt *pleaſant and delightful*, according as the things are found to be ſo, which are believed. Nor doth it in order hereto work by way of Enthuſiaſtical impulſion, without any reference to the external Revelation, that is, rationally and aptly ſutable to the working of the effect. For then, that ſhould no way have the place *ſo much as of means.* But there being ſufficient inducement to perſwade that this external Revelation is divine (ſo as to procure a rational aſſent to the things revealed, with any man, that, having that revelation, with the account of its firſt confirmations, ſhall but uſe his under-

ſtanding in reference thereto, and is not beſotted to a party of ſworn enemies to the Chriſtian name). This inward revelation then falling in, captivates his heart to an entire unitive cloſure, with the great things contained in the outward one; and principally with the Son of God himſelf, *unto which union*, that whole revelation is moſt directly ſubſervient. Therefore it was, that when divers others (of whom it is ſaid, and particularly of *Judas*, that they believed not) forſook Chriſt, *Peter* and the other Apoſtles ſtuck ſo reſolutely to him, becauſe, *we believe* (ſay they) and *are ſure* that *thou art Chriſt the ſon of the living God*; which aſſurance we may then conclude was much of another ſort than that of *Judas*; though we cannot ſuppoſe him to have wanted *a rational certainty* of the ſame truth, *ſufficient* to have overcome *objections in his judgment*: but *not ſufficient* to overcome the *contrary corrupt inclinations of his wicked heart.* Therefore as the inward revelation uſes not to do its work without the outward, (for I ſuppoſe we have not heard of many Chriſtians where the Goſpel hath not been), ſo nor is the outward revelation able, alone to beget that which, in the more eminent ſence, goes in Scripture under the name of *Faith.* It may beget that meerly *intellectual certainty* which may prevail againſt all doubts and objections in a mans mind to the contrary; but not the contrary inclinations of his corrupt will. Moſt mens faith is but opinionative, and many mens never reaches

Joh. 6.

reaches ſo high as to a rational opinion; *that* proceeds upon having ballanced conſiderations on both ſides, and inclines to that part on which ſeems to be the moſt weighty; whereas the Faith (as they call it) of too many is no other thing than a meerly blind and ſequacious humor, grounded upon nothing but a willingneſs to be in the faſhion; or the apprehenſion of diſgrace with other inconveniencies, if where that is the common profeſſion one ſhould profeſs to be any thing but a Chriſtian; or a lazy indifferency eaſily determinable to that part which is next at hand to be choſen; or it may be, they never having heard of another profeſſion (which precludes any choice at all).

But admit it did arrive to *a rational certainty* (as it eaſily might with them that have with the external requiſite advantages, competent underſtanding, patience, diligence, and impartiality to conſider); That is, ſuppoſe it to proceed upon that abundant evidence which the caſe will admit, that the Chriſtian Doctrine hath been teſtified by God; And that Gods teſtimony cannot deceive: There needs more *to win and overcome mens hearts*; which muſt be done e're the things revealed in the Goſpel can be apprehended *delectable*. What can any man have greater certainty of, *in a meer human way*, than all men have that they muſt dye? And yet how few are there whoſe ſpirits are formed hereby to any ſeriouſneſs agreeable to that perſwaſion? Whatever way a man comes to be

certain of any thing that hath a contrary tendency to the bent of his habitually wicked heart, he needs more than the evidence of the thing, to make it efficaciouſly determine his will againſt his former vicious courſe. If the matter be ſuch as properly falls under Faith; That Faith grounds upon the Authority of God apprehended as avouching the Truth of that revelation to which we ſubſcribe our aſſent. But then it is lively or languid, according as the apprehenſion is we have of that avouchment. But the apprehenſion which is only the product of the external revelation, even recommended by the moſt advantagious and convincing circumſtances, is too faint to command the Soul. Who amongſt all the people of the *Jews* at Mount *Horeb*, could have any doubt, but the Authority that avouched the Law there given them was Divine? And yet how boldly do they ruſh into Idolatry, againſt the expreſs letter of that Law; while the ſound of that dreadful *voice of words* which delivered it, could hardly, one would think, be well out of their ears! And though they could not doubt of Gods Authority, yet for all that, their frequent rebellions are plainly reſolved into *their infidelity. How long will this peo-*
Num. 14. 11. *ple provoke me? And how long will it be ere*
Pſal. 106. 24. *[they believe me], for all the ſigns which I have ſhewed among them? Yea they deſpiſed the pleaſant land: [they believed not] his word.* Or what place could be left for *rational doubt*, with the multitudes that beheld the

Miracles of our Lord Jeſus, but that they were Gods own Seal affixed purpoſely to the Doctrine taught by *him*? Yet how few (though we muſt ſuppoſe many convinc't) did heartily believe in him? more (abundantly) did upon a leſs-advantagious-external revelation after his aſcenſion; And the reaſon is plainly told us, *The Spirit was not yet given, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.* Joh. 7.39. And how expreſly have we it from his own mouth *, (after he had interpreted *coming to him* by *believing on him*) Joh. 6. v. 35. *No man can come unto me, except the Father that hath ſent me draw him.* And afterwards having ſaid, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth*; v.63. he adds, *But there are ſome of you, that believe not*, v.64. (ſo that no mans profeſſed aſſent, though as forward a profeſſor as *Judas* was, *there refer'd to*, will in ſtrict account intitle him a Believer, if it be not produced by the quickening influence of the Spirit). And then repeats, *Therefore I ſaid unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father.* v.65. And what provocation the Father had to with-hold that quickening Spirit, ſo generally, from that people, any one may ſee that reads their ſtory. Upon which, by the receſs of that Spirit, they are hardened to as great a Miracle as formerly their *Ægyptian* oppreſſors were many ages before (there being indeed no greater Miracle as was ſaid of old, than that men ſhould not believe upon the ſight of ſo many Miracles). And this

dreadful dereliction, and conſequent obduration we ſee is refer'd to *primitive Juſtice* as a vindictive diſpenſation. *But though he*
Joh. 12. v. 37. *had done ſo many Miracles before them, yet they believed not on him. That the ſaying of*
38. *Eſaias the Prophet might be fulfilled which he ſpake, Lord who hath believed our report? And*
Iſa. 53. 1. *to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed,* (where it is obvious to obſerve, that the *believing of the Goſpel-report* owes it ſelf to the *revelation of Gods arm*; or requires the exerting of his power, agreeable to that of the Apoſtle, *That*
Eph. 1: 19. *ye may know what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead, &c.*). And how the arm of the Lord came not to be revealed, or that power not to be put forth, is intimated in what follows, *Therefore they could not believe, be-*
Iſa. 6. *cauſe* (for which *Iſaias* is again quoted), *he had blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, &c.* Which ſhews, that as that blinding and hardening of eyes and hearts, in ſome ſuperadded degrees thereof, is the effect of a penal dereliction or retraction of Gods arm, for former obſtinate oppoſition to the external revelation of the Goſpel; So that there is a precedent blindneſs and hardneſs, not otherwiſe vincible than by the arm of the Lord; And which, it being penally withheld, will naturally grow worſe and worſe. And certainly *that*, upon the with-holding whereof, ſuch things certainly enſue as are

inconſiſtent

inconſiſtent with believing, muſt needs it ſelf *be neceſſary to it.* All which things conſidered, do ſo plainly ſpeak the *inſufficiency of a meer external revelation*, and the *neceſſity of an internal beſides*, unto that Faith, *which is the immediate ſpring of delight in God*; that it is not needful to inſiſt upon many plain Texts of Scripture beſides, that fully ſay the ſame thing. *As that no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the holy Ghoſt.* And again, *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt is born of God.* Upon which words, with many more of like import in the ſacred Volume, no ſenſe can be put which is tolerable, and not the ſame with what we have above aſſerted.

1 Cor. 12. 3. Joh. 4. 15. ch. 5. 1.

In ſhort, Faith is a part of homage paid to the Authority of the great God; which is to be eſtimated *ſincere*, according as it anſwers the end, for which the things to be beleived were revealed. That *end* is not to beget only the notion of thoſe things, as truths that are to be lodg'd in the mind, and go no further; as if they were to be underſtood true only that they might be ſo underſtood; But that the perſon might *accordingly* have his ſpirit formed, and might ſhape the courſe of his whole converſation; Therefore is it called the *obedience of faith*: And the ſame word which is wont to be rendered *unbeleif* ſignifies diſobedience, obſtinacy unperſwadeableneſs; being from a theam, which (as is

known) ſignifies to perſwade. So that this *homage* is then truly given to the eternal God, when his revelation is comply'd with and ſubmitted to, according to the true intent and purpoſe of it. Which, that it may be, requires that *his ſpirit* urge the ſoul with *his Authority*, and overpower it into an awful ſubjection thereto. The ſoul being ſo diſjointed by the Apoſtacy that its own faculties keep not (in reference to the things of God) their *natural order* to one another, further than as an holy rectitude is renewed in them by the holy Ghoſt. Therefore is it neceſſary, that the enlightening communication which he tranſmits into it, be not only ſo *clear*, as to ſcatter the darkneſs that beclouded the mind, but ſo penetrating, as to ſtrike and pierce the heart, to diſſolve and relaxe its ſtiff and frozen rigor, and render it capable of a new mould & frame. In order whereto, *God that* (at firſt) *commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, is ſaid*
2 Cor. 4. *to have ſhined into the hearts* (of them *viz.* whom he renews) *to give the light of the knowledg of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.*

And as they to whom this communication of God is in ſome degree afforded, do hereupon *apprehend* how neceſſary it was to them that it ſhould be afforded; and *be ſuch* as they *now find it*, (which they apprehended not before), ſo they perceive it to be *delightful* alſo, as well as *neceſſary*. And finding it yet given into them but in an imperfect degree, their continual cravings are ſtill for more.

And

And having *tasted hereby, how gracious the Lord is; as new-born-babes, they desire it, as sincere milk, that they may grow thereby.* They *hereby*, come to know God and the things of God *with savor.* And *wisdom having entered into their hearts, knowledg is pleasant to their soul.* Whereby, as every renewed taste provokes in them *new desire*, all such renewed desires dispose them unto *further and more satisfying delight.* They sensibly discern the difference between their former dry and sapless notions of God, and the lively-spirited apprehensions which they now have. They can in some measure understand the reason why the Apostle should in such a rapture speak of the *excellency of the knowledg of Christ Jesus our Lord*; And why he should so triumphingly give thanks to God for the *manifestation of the* [*savor*] *of his knowledg* in every place. They can perceive there was good sence in those words, as they have a more quick and judicious perception of the fragrancy of that knowledg. It is to them a refreshing, vital, quickening perfume, (as the word there, and before imports) most cheeringly odoriferous, the *savor of life to life*, lively in it self, and to them. So full of life, as to beget and transmit it; and repleniſh their Souls therewith. So as they might feel life thence working in all their powers; A revelation *of God*, that is of such *a nature*, cannot but be highly delectable.

1 Pet. 2. 2, 3.

Prov. 2. 10.

2 Cor. 2: 14.

v. 16.

1. In respect of the *matter* revealed, *God himself* especially (if not yet testifying himself

ſelf to be, yet at leaſt willing in Chriſt to become) *our God*; in ſuch a way, and upon ſuch terms as is expreſſed in the Goſpel. A more particular mention of the things (contained in this revelation) that are more apt to beget delight and feed it, is purpoſely defer'd, till we come to preſs and inforce the duty it ſelf.

2. In reſpect of the immediate way and manner of Revelation, with ſo much facility continually coming in from time to time, upon the Soul, according as it is found ready by a dutiful compliance to admit it, and doth ly open to it: (For otherwiſe, a fatherly ſeverity, is moſt fitly expreſſed in with-holding it at ſome times).

3. In reſpect of the life and vigor which it carries with it, whereby it is experienced to be *a vital light*; and that it is indeed (as is ſaid) *life*, which is the *light of men*. Dull, ſluggiſh, ineffectual notions of ſuch things can have little (comparatively) of delectation in them.

Joh: 1.

4. In reſpect of the deſign and tendency of the Revelation, (diſcernible at the ſame time), to draw the Soul into union with God; And that there may be a continual intercourſe between him and it. Not that it might have a tranſient glance of ſo lovely an object, and no more. When once it apprehends God hath made this light ſhine in upon me, *not to amuſe* me, but here he fixes it as a lamp *to guide* me, in a ſtated courſe of communion with him. How pleaſant is it to think he will be known for this bleſſed purpoſe!

Now

Now a communication of God, including a revelation of him, apt to beget ſuch a knowledg, cannot be without much matter of delight.

But beſides, that (though moſt naturally following thereupon) it alſo includes,

II. 2. *A transforming impreſſion of his image.* This yet more fully anſwers the enquiry when a perſon is ſaid *to enjoy God*; what doth he *immediately* enjoy? or whereby is he ſaid to *enjoy God?* what doth God communicate or tranſmit, by which he may be ſaid *to be enjoyed?* He communicates *his own living likeneſs*, the very image of himſelf; not the *Idea* or likeneſs only by which he is known; Though it muſt be confeſſed, the knowledg of him, if he be known to be what he truly is, muſt ſuppoſe a true likeneſs of him, offered to the mind, and formed there. But this of which we now ſpeak, is a not meerly *repreſentative* but *a real image.*

The product of the former it is, as is ſufficiently to be collected from what hath been ſaid. For that appears to be not a meer aiery, ſpiritleſs, ineffectual thing, as the notion of God, and of all divine matters is with the moſt; but as hath been ſaid *operative*, penetrating, efficacious, apt to beget ſutable impreſſions upon the heart, and wholly transform the Soul. The effect of it then is, *this transformative impreſſion it ſelf*; By which the Soul becomes another thing than it was; *A new creature*; old things being done away, and all things made new. In reſpect of this it is ſaid 2 Cor. 5.

to

to be, *born of God.* This is the *new man which after God is ſaid to be created in knowledg, righteouſneſs, and true holineſs*; *The divine nature participated*; The *ſeed of God*; The απαρχη, the prime and moſt excellent part of his creatures.

Eph. 4. 2 Pet. 1: 1 Joh. 3. Jam. 1.

Concerning this likeneſs, and the ſatisfyingneſs of it, in its perfect ſtate, though much have been diſcourſed elſewhere; It will be requiſite to ſay ſomewhat here alſo, that may bear a more direct reference to the preſent imperfect ſtate of the regenerate in this world.

That communication of God which muſt be ſuppoſed afforded them, in order to their delighting in him, could ſignify little to that purpoſe, if with deformed and diſeaſed Souls they were only to look upon a very lovely object; ſtill themſelves remaining what they were. Nor doth it delight them only as it is apprehended *apt and aiming* to work an happy change in them; but as it doth it or hath in part done it. As like an active quick flame it paſſes through their Souls, ſearches, melts them, burns up their droſs, makes them a new lump or maſs, forms them for Gods own uſe and converſe.

God is propoſed unto our communion and fellowſhip under the name of Light. But ſuch a light (it appears) as whereby *we that were darkneſs do alſo become light in the Lord* (as elſewhere it is expreſt.) That, as he is the *father of lights*, we may appear the children of ſuch a father, and walk accordingly *i. e.* as *children of light.* For we are preſently told

1 Joh. 1. 3. 5. Eph. 5.

that

that if we ſay we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth. v. 6.
But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, v. 7.
then we have a mutual fellowſhip, (*i. e.* God and we). It is needful then, that we have that apprehenſion of him. And he therefore by ſolemn meſſage makes that declaration of himſelf that he is *Light*, (*This then is the meſſage which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and with him is no darkneſs at all*), *i. e.* the moſt pure, holy, excellent, glorious Being.

But for what purpoſe are we to have that apprehenſion? We are told by the Apoſtle for what; He there makes that declaration with that deſign, that we might be entered into the ſame fellowſhip in which he was already: For that end therefore we are to have this apprehenſion. But inaſmuch as he immediately adds, That yet while we converſe in darkneſs, we lie, if we pretend to that fellowſhip: 'Tis manifeſt, that this diſcovery of God and our ſutable apprehenſion are no further ſerviceable to *their end*, than *bringing us into fellowſhip with him*, than as by his beams he begets us into his own likeneſs herein: And that (ſo far as our capacity and preſent ſtate admit) we be truly in a degree made pure, bright, ſhining, excellent creatures, reſembling our Maker, and being a ſecond time formed after the image of him that created us.

The Goſpel is the formative inſtrument in this work, as it was ſaid to be the inſtrument

or

or means of our *intellectual illumination.* The new creature is ſaid to be begotten of the Word of God; And the divine Nature to be communicated through the exceeding great and precious promiſes, (which diſcovering Gods *gracious Nature* and *favourable inclination* towards us, are an apt means (but no more than a means) to render us *well-natur'd* (not croſs, thwarting, contrary) unto him. Faith admits the Goſpel-diſcovery into the Soul, and of an external word without, makes it become an *ingrafted word*; *The word of Chriſt dwelling richly in us*; And ſo gives it the advantage of becoming thus mightily operative; For unto them only *who believe* is it the power of God to Salvation. And being received, not as the word of man, but as the word of God, it works effectually *in them that believe.* To them who believe it not, it ſignifies nothing, is to them an empty ſound, or only as a tale that is told.

And inaſmuch as the Goſpel-revelation is the inſtrument of this impreſſion; by it the impreſſion muſt be meaſured, with it muſt it agree. Which revelation being expreſſive of the Nature of God, and of his mind and will in reference to us; the impreſſion cannot but be agreeable to that revelation; but it muſt alſo carry in it the reſemblance and likeneſs of God himſelf; for the Goſpel-revelation is Gods Seal; the ſtamp upon it is a model of his Image. Whence therefore the Soul ſealed therewith, bears on it at once the ſignature both of the *Author* and the

Inſtru-

Inſtrument. But becauſe our beſt and ſureſt way of forming true and right apprehenſions of God, is to attend and guide our ſelves by the repreſentation that is there made of him (for it were uſeleſs and in vain, if letting our thoughts work at random without reference to it, we might conceive as fitly of God and his mind concerning us, as by the direction and guidance of it); Therefore are we to aim at conformity to God *as he is there repreſented.* For that is the proper likeneſs to him we are to inquire after (and which only could be impreſſed by his Goſpel) *that is* expreſſed and repreſented there. *We all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image from glory to glory.* 2 Cor. 3. 18. It is by the glory of the Lord ſhining through *that glaſs*, that we are changed. And the image whereinto we are changed is the *ſame image* that is to be ſeen in that glaſs. For there God hath provided ſuch a repreſentation of himſelf and of his mind ſhould appear, as is moſt ſutable to our caſe and ſtate, and which it moſt concerned us to have the view and the image of. *That* repreſents him in his *imitable excellencies*; and ſhews what he is *towards us*, what his counſels, determinations, and conſtitutions are concerning us, and hereupon ſhews, *what we ſhould be*, or what temper of Spirit becomes us in reference to ſuch a revelation. And *ſuch*, when we receive this his impreſſive communication, he really makes us thereby become. And then

is

is it that it will be found moſt highly delectable. An heart formed according to the revelation of God in Chriſt, and caſt into the mould of the Goſpel (as is the import of the Apoſtles words,---*Ye have obeyed from the heart the doctrine*, into the type or frame whereof ye were delivered) hath a ſpring of pleaſure in it ſelf. Not of perfect unmixed pleaſure; for there is much yet remaining, that cannot but be very diſpleaſing and offenſive to ſuch as have learned no longer to put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter, and have ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern betwixt good and evil. And indeed by the ſame vital principle the Soul is made capable of both the ſweeteſt delights and the quickeſt ſenſe of pain; while it was dead it was ſenſible of neither.

Rom. 6. 17

Nor is it an original Spring; Whatever it hath that is good and pleaſant comes from an higher Head, and is communicated. But the communication remains not in this heart as in a dead receptacle, but creates the Soul where it is a living ſpring it ſelf. *The Lord ſhall ſatisfie thy Soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou ſhalt be like a watered garden, and as a ſpring of water whoſe waters fail not.* After which it follows, *Then ſhalt thou delight thy ſelf in the Lord*, &c. So though the waters that are ſo pleaſantly refreſhing to holy Souls are given by Chriſt; yet he himſelf tells us, they *ſhall be in him to whom they are given a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life.* Whence alſo the *Good man* is ſaid to be *ſatisfied from himſelf*; And *the mouth of the righteous*

Iſa. 58. 11.

v. 14.

Joh. 4. 14.

Pro. 14. 14. ch. 10.

teous to be *a well of life i. e. to others*, much more muſt his *heart* be ſo *to himſelf*. Nor indeed can there be a vainer or more abſurd deſign and expectation, than to aim immediately at delights and joys, without ever looking after that transforming, purifying, quickening *communication* from God, in which he is to be enjoyed; which is apparently the (moſt prejudicial and dangerous) miſtake, the practical error (and ſo much the worſe therefore) of many perſons of much pretence to Religion, that dream and boaſt of nothing leſs than raptures and tranſports, having never yet known or felt what the work of *regeneration* or the *new creature* means. And having only got ſome notions of God and Chriſt, that tickle their fancies without ever changing their hearts, theſe go for divine injoyments. Others ſomewhat awakened and convinced but not renewed, though they do not pretend already to have, yet do (from the ſame miſtaken apprehenſion) as vainly ſeek and catch at joys and ſweetneſſes; while their unſanctified hearts do yet ly ſteept in the gall of bitterneſs: And they wonder and complain, that they feel not in themſelves the delights whereof they find Scripture ſometimes make mention, while in the mean time they expect and ſnatch at them in that prepoſterous impoſſible way, as to abſtract them from the things themſelves, wherein the pleaſure and delight lies. They would have *delight* without the *delectable good*, that muſt immediately afford and yield it; or without

foregoing the noyſom evils that reſiſt and hinder it; which therefore makes it neceſſary to treat the more largely of the *delightful communication*, by which only intervening Souls are capable of delighting in God.

And as to this Branch of it, *The vital Sanctifying transforming influence*, whereby the Soul is wrought to a conformity to the Goſpel; If we take a (ſomewhat more diſtinct) view of it, we ſhall find, it cannot but have in it abundant matter of delight. In the general, The thing here to be communicated, is *an univerſal rectitude* of temper and diſpoſitions, including

The { Removal of ſuch as are ſinful and corrupt;
Settlement of ſuch as are holy and gracious.

Both to be meaſured and eſtimated, as to their good or evil, by the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Now ſurely that muſt be a bleſſed and delighful ſtate (and its that towards which this divine communication gradually tends) wherein a wretched Soul, that was loſt in the impurities of ſin, ſhall be ſtript and unclothed of all the pravity, perverſe inclinations, corrupt affections which the Goſpel of Chriſt condemns; and inveſted with all the parts of that purity, that gracious and holy frame which that Goſpel recommends. For as the former carry in them matter of certain vexation and anguiſh, which it is hereby freed from; So the latter manifeſtly carry in them-

themſelves matter of unſpeakable delight and pleaſure, which it hereby partakes. And by the ſame degrees by which this divine communication infers the latter of theſe, it expels the former. By the ſame degrees by which any are made *partakers of the divine nature*, they *eſcape the corruptions which are in the world through luſt.*

And that we may be here a little more particular, without deſcending into the innumerable particularities which might be ſeverally ſpoken of upon this occaſion; we ſhall only conſider this *heart-rectifying communication*, in reference to ſome of the more principal things, towards which the ſpirit of man may be either *perverſly*, or *duly and aright* inclin'd; that we may ſee what matter of delight it infers and brings with it.

In order whereto it muſt be conſidered, that wherein it is *transforming*, it is alſo *enlivening*; And therefore furniſhes the Soul, with the power of *ſpiritual ſenſation*; whereby it comes to *apprehend* its former temper, as very grievous and deteſtable; not only being intire and undiminiſhed, but even the reliques of it which do yet remain; and proportionably, the holy frame to be introduc't, as highly covetable and to be infinitely deſired.

Which being ſuppoſed, It muſt needs be very delightful to ſuch a Soul, to feel it ſelf in part rectified, and to expect it further in its temper and inclinations,

1. Towards God, towards whom it was

moſt disinclined: That is, both *towards him as its end*, and *towards Chriſt as its way to him.*

As to himſelf it's end. It finds upon reflection, it *was dead towards God*, without motion towards him, without inclination, all it's powers bent and ſet quite another way; So that to perſwade it to begin a courſe of holy motion towards God, was a like thing as to perſwade a ſtone to fly upwards. It could not truſt the *original Truth*, nor love the *ſoveraign Good*, nor obey the *ſupream Authority.* Its courſe was nothing elſe but continual receſſion from him, towards whom it ſhould have been continually preſſing forward with all its might. It was wont to ſay to him, in whom was its life and all its hope, *Depart from me, I deſire not the knowledg of thy ways*; was utterly *alienated from the life of God*, and did chuſe to *live as without him in the world.* And although it ſtill remain thus in too great a degree, yet as it abhors this as an hateful way of living, and deſires it may be otherwiſe; ſo is it ſenſibly delightful that it doth in ſome degree perceive a change; That now it can find it ſelf returning into its right and natural ſtate of ſubordination to God. Which while it was out of it, laid that claim to it, that its diſlocation was uneaſie, and it could have no reſt; though it was not aware what the matter was with it, and could never throughly apprehend, that it ought (much leſs could deſire or aim) to return.

And

And if in returning, and it's continual courſe afterwards (which ought to be but a continuing return and moving back towards God), there be much cauſe for the exerciſe of *Repentance*; the diſpoſition whereto is a part of that new nature now communicated; yet even ſuch *relentings* as are due and ſutable upon this account are not unpleaſant: There is pleaſure mingled with ſuch tears, and with thoſe mournings which are not without hope, and which flow naturally and without force, from a living principle within, as waters from their ſtill-freſhly ſpringing fountain. When the Soul finds it ſelf unbound and ſet at liberty; when it can freely pour out it ſelf to God, diſſolve kindly and melt before him; It doth it with regret only at what it hath done and been, not at what it is now doing, except that it can do it no more; affecting even to be infinite herein, while it yet ſees it muſt be confined within ſome bounds. It loves to lyé in the duſt and abaſe it ſelf; and is pleaſed with the humiliation, contrition and brokenneſs of heart which *repentance towards God* includes in it. So that as God is delighted with this *Sacrifice*, ſo *it is* with the *offering* of it up to him. Many men apprehend a certain ſweetneſs in revenge; ſuch a one finds it only in this juſt revenge upon himſelf.

How unexpreſſible pleaſure accompanies its devoting it ſelf to God, when bemoaning it ſelf, and returning with weeping and ſupplication,

It ſays, "Now *Lo I come to thee, thou art the* "*Lord my God.* I have brought thee back "thine own, what I had ſacrilegiouſly alie- "nated and ſtol'n away, the heart which "was gone aſtray, that hath been ſo long a "vagabond and fugitive from thy bleſſed "preſence, ſervice and communion. Take "now the Soul which thou haſt made; Poſ- "ſeſs thy own right; enter upon it, ſtamp "it with the intire impreſſion of thine own "Seal, and mark it for thine. Other Lords "ſhall no more have dominion. What have "I to do any more with the Idols where- "with I was wont to provoke thee to jea- "louſie? I will now make mention of thy "name, and of thine only. I bind my ſelf "to thee in everlaſting bonds, in a covenant "never to be forgotten.

The ſelf-denial which is included in this tranſaction, hath no little pleaſure in it. When the Soul freely quits all pretence to it ſelf, and by its own conſent paſſes into his (now acknowleged) right; diſclaims it ſelf, and all its own former intereſts, inclinations and ends, and is reſolved to be to him and to no other. When this is done *Unreſervedly*, without any intention of retaining or keeping back any thing from him; *Abſolutely*, and without making any conditions of its own, but only agreeing to and thankfully accepting his; *Peremptorily* and without heſitation, and without halting between two opinions, *Shall I?* or *ſhall I not?* (as if it were ready in the ſame breath to retract and undo

its

its own act) How doth it now rejoice to feel it ſelf offer willingly! They that have life and ſenſe about them, can tell there is pleaſure in all this. And the oftner repetition is made hereof (ſo it be done with life, not with trifling formality) they ſo often renew the reliſhes with themſelves of the ſame pleaſure.

Continued commerce with God, agreeable to the tenor of that League and Covenant ſtruck with him, how pleaſant and delightful is it! To be a *friend of God*, an aſſociate of the moſt High, a domeſtique, no more a ſtranger, a foreigner, but of his own houſhold. To live wholly upon the plentiful proviſions, and under the happy order and government of his family. To have an heart to ſeek all from him, and lay out all for him! How great is the pleaſure of truſt, of living free from care; that is, of any thing, but how to pleaſe and honour him in a cheerful unſolicitous dependance, expecting from him our daily bread, believing he will not let our Souls famiſh. That while they hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs they ſhall be filled; that they ſhall be ſuſtained with the bread and waters of life; that when they hunger he will feed them with hidden *Manna*, and with the fruits that grow on the tree of life in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God; that when they thirſt he will give water, and add milk and honey without money, without price.

And for the body not to doubt, but he

that feeds Ravens and clothes Lillies will feed and cloath them. To be ſo taken up in ſeeking his Kingdom and righteouſneſs, as freely to leave it to him to add the *other things* as he ſees fit; To take no thought for to morrow; To have an heart framed herein according to divine precept; Not to be encumbered or kept in an anxious ſuſpence by the thoughts and fears of what may fall out, by which many ſuffer the ſame affliction a thouſand times over, which God would have them ſuffer but once; A firm repoſe on the goodneſs of providence, and its ſure and never-erring wiſdom; A ſteady perſwaſion, that our heavenly Father knows what we have need of, and what it is fitteſt for us to want, to ſuffer or enjoy; How delightful a life do theſe make! And how agreeable to one born of God, his own Son, and heir of all things; as being joint-heirs with Chriſt, and claiming by that large grant, that ſays *all things are yours*; only that in minority it is better to have a wiſe Fathers allowance, than be our own carvers.

To live in the fear of God, is not without its pleaſure. It compoſes the Soul, expels the vanity which is not without vexation, repreſſes exorbitant motions, checks unruly paſſions, keeps all within in a pleaſant peaceful calm; Is health to the navel, and marrow to the bones.

To live in his love, is delight it ſelf, or a tendency towards it. The diſpoſition whereto being communicated from God, and a part of

of the holy new creature derived from him, is alſo part of the (ſecondary or ſubſervient) delectable object. As the light that ſerves unto viſion is partly (as the mediate object) ſomewhat of what I ſee, and doth partly (as a principle) actuate and concur with the faculty in the act of ſeeing. And as the bleſſed God himſelf is both the firſt Principle and ultimate Object of that and other gracious acts *: Therefore it cannot but be pleaſant to the Soul, to perceive that powerful influence from God ſtirring in it, by which it is diſpoſed to deſign and pitch upon him as the Great Object of its higheſt delight, unto whom it laboured under ſo vile and wicked an averſion heretofore. Yea though it yet have no certain perſwaſion of a preſent intereſt in him, yet this diſpoſition of heart towards him, and that it finds it *could* ſatisfyingly reſt in him as its *beſt good*, upon *ſuppoſition* it had ſuch an intereſt, the very ſtrivings and contentions of the Soul towards him upon this account, are not without a preſent pleaſure: As we behold with an intermixed *deſire* and *delight* a grateful object, which we would enjoy, but do not yet know whether we can compaſs or not. To be in that temper of Soul, as to reſolve, Him I will ſeek and purſue, him I will ſtudy to

* And how rationally men may be ſaid at the ſame time to love, delight in and enjoy the amiable or delectable object, and therewith alſo love their own love, enjoy their own fruition, or delight in their own delight; enough is ſaid by ſome Schoolmen. Nor indeed can it be conceived how the Soul can *continue* to love or delight in any thing but it muſt be ſo. For while it *perſeveres*, every latter act juſtifies the former, and takes complacency therein, but all as directed towards ſuch an object.

to pleaſe and ſerve, and ſpend my ſtrength and life in ſerving him (which is to live in his love) though I yet know not whether he will accept, or how he will deal with me! This cannot but have a certain ſenſible delectation in it.

To live in a ſtated habitual ſubjection to him as the *Lord* of our lives, How pleaſant is it! To have learned to obey; To be accuſtomed to the yoke; To taſte and prove the goodneſs and acceptableneſs of his will, through an effectual transformation in the renewal of our minds; To be by the law of the ſpirit of life made free from the law of ſin and death; To be able to ſpeak it as the undiſguiſed ſenſe of our hearts, *becauſe thy law is holy, therefore thy ſervant loveth it*; To reckon it *a royal law of liberty*, ſo as to account our ſelves ſo much the more free, by how much we are the more thus bound; When we affect to be preſcrib'd to, and are become *patient of Government*, not apt to chafe at the bridle, or ſpurn and kick at the boundaries that hem us in: This is a temper that hath not more of duty in it than it hath of delight. There is ſuch a thing as *delighting in the law of God, according to the inward man*, when there is yet a difficulty in ſuppreſſing and keeping under inordinate rebellious workings of corrupt nature; unto which there is no deſire an indulgence ſhould be given, by having the law attempered to them, but ſeverity rather uſed to reduce them to a conformity to the law: So will it be, if the law become an heart impreſſion; when it can once be

be truly ſaid, *Thy law is in my heart*, It will be alſo with the ſame ſincerity ſaid, *I delight to do thy will, O God.* Pſal. 40.

The continual exerciſe of good conſcience towards God, hath great pleaſure in it. Hereby our way and courſe is continually reviewed, and we paſs cenſures upon our ſelves, and upon that account ſurvey our own works. And by how much the more carefully and often this is done, ſo much the more delectable it will be; that is, the more approvable we ſhall find them upon review. For we ſhall order our courſe the more warily, as we reckon upon undergoing an inquiſition and ſearch; wherein an apprehenſive ſerious heart well underſtands it is not it ſelf to be the ſupreme Judg. How bleſſed an imitation might there here be of the bleſſed God himſelf, who we find beheld his ſix days works, and *lo they were all very good*; whereupon follows his delightful day of reſt; So we ſhall, in ſome degree of conformity to him, finding our works to be in that ſort good, as that he will by gracious indulgence accept them as ſuch, have our own Sabbath, a ſweet and peaceful reſt in our own ſpirits. Though we can pretend no higher than *ſincerity only*, yet how ſweet are the reflections of a well-inſtructed conſcience upon that! when our hearts reproach us not, and we reſolve they ſhall not as long as we live; we are conſcious to our ſelves of no baſe deſigns, we propoſe nothing to our ſelves, wherein we apprehend cauſe to decline Gods eye; *we walk in the light*, and are ſeek-

ſeeking no darkneſs or ſhadow of death, where (as workers of iniquity) we may hide our ſelves from him; Can implore him as an aſſiſtant, and appeal to him as a Judg in reference to our daily affairs and wonted courſe: Is this without pleaſure! *This is our rejoi-*
2 Cor. 1. 12 *cing*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God we have had our converſation*, &c.

And thus to converſe with God, a him whom we daily deſign to glorifie and ſerve, and whom we expect daily in ſome meaſure, and fully and finally ere it be long, to enjoy, Is certainly throughout *a way of pleaſantneſs and peace.* How delectable then is this Soul-rectifying communication from God, whereby, being before ſo diſaffected, it becomes now ſo well inclin'd towards him in all theſe reſpects.

But becauſe the exigency of the caſe did require (by reaſon of ſin that had cut off the intercourſe) that there ſhould be a Mediator to open the way and renew the former outworn friendſhip; Therefore it was alſo neceſſary that ſo the Soul might duly move towards God, it ſhould be rightly framed and diſpoſed alſo *towards him.* We are therefore to conſider too, how delectable this communication muſt be, as it aright diſpoſes the heart *towards Chriſt*, our way to God.

For *towards him* we muſt underſtand it to have been moſt obſtinately and inflexibly averſe; and that therefore a mighty communication

munication of power was neceſſary to ſet it right here.

Unto that part of Religion which is natural, there was ſo much of an advantage beforehand, as that there was an old foundation to build upon. There are ſome notions of God left, not only concerning his Exiſtence, but his Nature and Attributes, many of them. And from the Apprehenſion *what he was*, it was in ſome meaſure diſcernible *what he ſhould have been*, and ought yet to be towards him; And from thence many checks and rebukes of conſcience wherein it was found to be otherwiſe: So that here was ſomewhat *in Nature* to be wrought upon, as to this part of Religion. But as to that part which reſpects the Mediator, this was a frame wholly to be rais'd up from the ground. There were no principles *immediately and directly* inclining to take part with the Goſpel; But all to be implanted anew. The way that God would take to bring back Souls to him being ſo infinitely above all human thought. And therefore, though to a conſidering Pagan it would not ſound ſtrangely, that God ought to be truſted, feared, loved, &c. yet *even to ſuch* the *Goſpel of Chriſt* was *fooliſhneſs*. Beſides, that this way of dealing with men was not only unknown and unimaginable to them, not ſo much as once thought of, or to be gueſt at. But the tendency and aſpect of it (when it ſhould come to be made known) was ſuch as that it could not but find the temper of mens ſpirits moſt ſtrongly oppoſite, not meerly ignorant, but pre-

prejudic't and highly diſaffected. For this courſe moſt directly tended to take men quite off from their old bottom; To ſtoop and humble, and even bring them to nothing; To ſtain the pride of their Glory, and lay them down in the duſt as abject wretches, in themſelves fit for nothing, but to be trampled on and cruſht by the foot of divine revenge. Suppoſe a man to have admitted a conviction from the light of his own mind and conſcience *that he was a ſinner*, and had offended his Maker, incur'd his juſt diſpleaſure, and made himſelf liable to his puniſhing juſtice; It would yet have been a hard matter to make him believe it altogether impoſſible to him, to do any thing to remedy the matter, and reſtore himſelf to divine favour and acceptance. He would naturally be inclin'd to think; why admit the caſe be ſo, he ſhould eaſily find out a way to make God amends. He would recount with himſelf all his own natural excellencies, and think himſelf very capable of doing ſome great thing, that ſhould more than expiate his offence, and make recompence abundantly for any wrong that he had done. But when the Goſpel ſhall come, and tell him he hath deſerved eternal wrath, that his ſin is inexpiable, but by everlaſting ſufferings, or what is of equal value; That here is one (the eternal Son of God) who became a man like himſelf, and thereupon a voluntary Sacrifice, to make atonement for the tranſgreſſion of men; That God will never accept another Sacrifice for the ſins of men

men than his, nor ever any ſervice at their hands, but for his ſake; That *him* now revealed to them they muſt receive, rely upon, and truſt to wholly, or periſh without mercy; Yea, and that he hath put the Government over them, into his hands, laid it on his ſhoulders, and to him they muſt ſubject themſelves as their Ruler and Judg, the great Arbiter of life and death to them and all men;

That they are to be intirely devoted to him as long as they live, as their Redeemer and Lord; In him as they are to have righteouſneſs and ſtrength, ſo to him they muſt pay all poſſible homage and ſubjection, to him their knees muſt bow, and their tongues confeſs; They muſt receive the Law from his mouth; Be preſcribed to by him, comply with his will, though never ſo much to the croſſing of their own; And though notwithſtanding, they muſt know they can deſerve nothing by it; That ſo vile and worthleſs miſcreants they are become that God will never have to do with them upon other terms.

When this ſhall appear the ſtate of the caſe, and it comes to be apprehended, "Then "muſt I yeild my ſelf a greater tranſgreſſor "than ever I thought, and an undone impo-"tent helpleſs wretch? I ſhall thus make "nothing of my ſelf: And what muſt all "my natural or acquired excellencies go juſt "for nothing? And a perſon of ſuch worth "and accompliſhments as I, be thus brought "down into the duſt? Yea and beſides, to

"be

"be brought, under ſuch bonds, and pro-
"feſs to owe my ſelf ſo intirely to a Redee-
"mer, that I muſt for ever live after his will
"and pleaſure, and no more at my own;
"And can never hope, if I take a liberty to
"indulge my ſelf beſides the allowance of
"his rules, that I can ever make any amends
"for ſuch tranſgreſſion by any thing that I
"can do. So that by taking his gift (of
"my pardon and life) upon ſuch terms, I
"ſhall ſell my liberty, and render my ſelf a per-
"fect ſlave to his will and pleaſure for ever.
Here now cannot but be a ſtrong ſtream to be ſtriven againſt, and moſt vehement counter-ſtrivings of the *haughty* and licentious ſpirit of man. So that it is not ſtrange it ſhould be ſaid by our Saviour, *No man can come to me except my father draw him.* And that the exceeding greatneſs of power, according to the workings of the mightieſt power in any caſe, ſhould be put forth upon them that believe. Therefore are men *in Chriſt* by *creative power* only; *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new Creature.* He is new made, if he be in him. And this averſion being ſo *deeply natural*, will ſtill in a degree remain (while any thing of corrupt nature remains) in the hearts of even the regenerate themſelves.

2 Cor: 5. 15.

Therefore a continual exertion of the ſame power will be ever requiſite to hold Souls to Chriſt, and retain them in their ſtation *in him.* He that *eſtabliſheth us with you in Chriſt* [*is God*] *&c. q.d.* It is only *a God* that can do this.

2 Cor. 1.

There-

Therefore how is God admired and adored upon this ſingle account. *Now to him that is of power to ſtabliſh you according to my Goſpel, and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt according to the revelation of the myſtery*, which was kept ſecret ſince the world began, (this was indeed a great Secret to the lapſed world) ----------*To God only wiſe be glory through Jeſus Chriſt for ever. Amen.* Rom. 16.

But as the heart-rectifying communication from God, in this matter, is ſuch as carries *mighty power* with it, ſo it doth *proportionable pleaſure*, when it hath overcome, and (to the pitch of ſincerity) ſet the Soul right in this thing.

How delectable is it to *receive* the Son of God! when the heart is made willing in the day of power! when his cords take hold of the Soul, and draw it to him! What pleaſure is there in the *conſenting, ſelf-reſigning act and diſpoſition!*

It is moſt highly delightful to receive him, and give up our ſelves to him *as our full ſutable good*, ſo exactly anſwering all the exigencies of our diſtreſſed caſe; when ſenſibly apprehending the true ſtate of it, the Soul cries out, *None but Chriſt*, and finds him preſent, waiting only for conſent, readily offering himſelf, *Here I am, take me, thy Jeſus, thy help, thy life!* How overcomingly pleaſant is this to a Soul that feels its diſtreſs, and perceives it ſelf ready to periſh; Yea and that daily ſees it ſelf periſhing, were it not for him. How pleaſant, *when in the time of love* he finds the

poor Soul in its blood, and ſays to it, *live*; clothes it, decks it, makes it perfect through his own comlineſs, tenders himſelf to it, *unto it* taken off the dunghil, caſt out in the moſt lothſom deplorable plight; And enters the marriage Covenant with it, (we need not be ſqueamiſh or ſhy to ſpeak after God himſelf, ſo repreſenting this matter), overcomes by his own mercy and goodneſs, and prevails with a ſinful creature to accept him. How *gladly* doth it throw off every thing of its own, that it may intirely poſſeſs him and be poſſeſſed by him. Here is the Joy of a Nuptial Solemnity, or the Joy of Eſpouſals. *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.*

While as yet this tranſaction is not diſtinctly reflected on, (as when poſſibly afterwards it is, there may great difficulties and doubts ariſe, whether all were rightly done, or yet be on its own part, yea or no) if however it be truly done, in the very doing it ſelf, and the ſame continuing diſpoſition there is a ſenſible and inſeparable delight. I ſay in the ſame diſpoſition, as often as by any repeated acts of the ſame kind, it expreſſes and ſhews it ſelf: That is, as oft as this Covenant is renewed (whether with ſolemnity or more occaſionally), though the relation ariſing thence, be not in the ſame inſtant conſidered or reflected on, nor the *ſincerity* of the act it ſelf, which is neceſſary thereto; yet that very conſent it ſelf, if it be ſincere, hath a ſecret joy accompanying it; and the Soul *feels* the grate-

fulneſs

fulneſs and pleaſure of its own act, though it do not for the preſent examine and take a view of it. For it is now from a *principle of life*, imbracing and drawing into union with it ſelf an object that is *all life and goodneſs, and ſweetneſs*; which therefore ſheds its own delightful ſavour and fragrancy through the Soul, while it is in the mean time acting only upon the object directly, and not reflecting upon its own act, or conſidering in that very inſtant what will be conſequential thereupon. But if withal it do conſider, (as that conſideration cannot be far off, though it cannot conſider every thing at once), that it is receiving him that is to bring it to God, who is *able to do it*, (*even to ſave to the uttermoſt all that will come to God by him*), who is *intent upon that deſign*, and did in the midſt of dying agonies breath forth his Soul in the proſecution of it; and with whom God requires it to unite for this very purpoſe; This cannot but add unſpeakably to the delightfulneſs of this tranſaction, and of this effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, in the virtue whereof the thing is done, how oft ſoever it be (ſeriouſly) done; As our caſe and ſtate require that it be very often.

And to receive him as our Lord, (which is joined with that other capacity wherein we receive him, *viz.* of a *Jeſus* or *Saviour*; *As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus* [*the Lord*], *ſo &c.*). Col. 2. 6. This alſo, and the heart-ſubduing influence that diſpoſes to it, is moſt highly delectable. When the Soul, that was ſo ſtoutly averſe,

and that once ſaid within it ſelf, I will not have him to reign over me, is brought freely to yeild; and with ſincere loyal reſolutions and affections devotes it ſelf to him, conſents to his government, ſubmits its neck and ſhoulder to his yoke and burden; ſays to him with an ungainſaying heart, as its full ſenſe, "Now thou Lord of my life and "hope, who haſt ſo long ſtriven with me, "ſo oft and earneſtly preſt me hereto, ſo va- "rioufly dealt with me, to make me under- "ſtand thy merciful deſign, and who ſeekeſt "to *rule* with no other aim or intent, but "that thou may'ſt *ſave*; and who haſt found- "ed thy dominion in thy blood, and didſt "dy and revive and riſe again that thou "mighteſt be Lord of the living and the "dead, and therefore my Lord; Accept now "a ſelf-reſigning Soul; I make a free ſurren- "der of my ſelf, I bow and ſubmit to thy "Sovereign Power, I fall at the footſtool "of thy Throne, Thou Prince of the "Kings of the Earth, who haſt loved ſin- "ners, and waſht them from their ſins in thy "blood; Glory in thy conqueſt, Thou haſt "overcome, I will from henceforth be no lon- "ger mine own, but thine; I am ready to "receive thy commands, to do thy will, to "ſerve thy intereſts, to ſacrifice *my all* to thy "Name and Honour; my whole life and be- "ing are for ever thine.

I ſay (as before) there is pleaſure in the *very doing* this it ſelf, as often as it is ſincerely done; And it adds hereto, if it be more di-

ſtinctly

ſtinctly conſidered, It is no mean or any way undeſerving perſon to whom this homage is paid, and obligation taken on unto future obedience; He is the brightneſs of the Fathers glory, the expreſs Image of his perſon, the Heir of all things, and who ſuſtains all things by the word of his power: It is he whoſe name is *Wonderful*, *Counſellor*, the *mighty God*, the *everlaſting Father*, the *Prince of peace*: 'Tis he to whom all power is given both in heaven and earth, and (more eſpecially) power over all fleſh, that he might give eternal life to as many as were given him; 'Tis he who ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, and made an open ſhew of them; He whom becauſe when he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, he humbled himſelf, made himſelf of no reputation, took on him the form of a ſervant, became obedient to death, the Father hath therefore highly exalted, and given him a Name above every name, that in his Name, every knee ſhould bow; And of whom, when he brought him (his firſt-born) into the world, he ſaid, *Let all the Angels of God worſhip him.*

And ſuch a one he is, whoſe temper is all goodneſs and ſweetneſs. *Tell Sion, thy King cometh meek and lowly.* He came into this world drawn down only by his own pity and love, beholding the deſolations and ruins that were wrought in it every where. Sin univerſally reigning, and death by ſin, and ſpreading its dark ſhadow, and a dreadful cloud over all the earth. In which darkneſs the Prince thereof

was ruling and leading men captive at his will; having drawn them off from the bleſſed God their life, and ſunk them into a deep oblivion of their own original; and diſaffection to their true happineſs that could only be found there.

This great Lord and Prince of life and peace came down on purpoſe to be the *Reſtorer of Souls, to repair the deſolations and ruins of many generations.* He came full of grace and truth, and hath ſcattered bleſſings over the world whereſoever he came; hath infinitely obliged all that ever knew him; and is he in whom all the nations of the earth muſt be bleſſed; And who would not with joy ſwear fealty to him, and take pleaſure to do him homage? Who would not recount with delight the unexpreſſible felicity of living under the governing power of ſuch a one?

And if the tenor and ſcope of all his Laws and Conſtitutions be viewed over, what will they be found, but obligations upon men to be happy; How eaſie his yoke, how light his burden, what is the frame of his Kingdom, or whereof doth it conſiſt but Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt. And who would not now ſay, *This Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoyce, let the multitude of the Iſles be glad thereof.* Why ſhould it not be triumphingly ſaid among the Heathen, That the Lord reigneth, that the world alſo ſhall be eſtabliſhed, that it cannot be moved; Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad; let the ſea roar, and the fulneſs thereof; let the fields rejoice and all that is therein, and all the trees of the wood rejoice! Its

Pſal. 96.

Its plain, that be the matter of joy here what it will, be there never ſo much cauſe of exultation and glorying in him, The *righteouſneſs and peace* which his Kingdom promiſes, never actually take place, nor the *joy* that is connexion therewith, till the Holy Ghoſt diſpoſe and form mens ſpirits thereto. For all this is but meer dream and idle talk to thoſe who hear only of theſe things, and feel not that vital influence inſinuating it ſelf, that may give the living ſenſe and ſavor of them. And we may rather expect ſeas and fields, beaſts and trees, to ſing his triumphant Song, and chant his praiſes, than thoſe men whoſe hearts are not attempered to his Government, and who are yet under the dominion of another Lord, not being yet *by the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, made free from the law of ſin and death*: But where this is effectually done, How large matter of moſt rational pleaſure do they find here; while there is nothing in that whole Syſtem of Laws by which he governs, that is either vain, unequal, or unpleaſant, or upon any account grievous? only this is not the eſtimate of diſtempered ſpirits, or of any other than them in whoſe hearts his Law is written, and who becauſe *they love him, keep his Commandments.* Unto Love his commands are moſt connatural; *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; They are not grievous i. e.* (by the *Meioſis* which ſome do reaſonably enough apprehend in thoſe words), they are joyous, delightful, pleaſant, but *to them only who*

Rom. 14. 17.

Joh. 15.

1 Joh. 5. 3.

being born of God, have overcome the world. This holy influence and communication of God, is therefore grateful, and contributes not a little to delight in this reſpect, that thereby mens ſpirits are rectified and ſet right towards God, *viz.* both towards the Creator and Redeemer.

2. *As hereby they are rectified towards men,* having the univerſal Law of Love wrought deep into their hearts; being fill'd with all goodneſs, righteous meekneſs, mercifulneſs; apt to do no wrong, to bear any, to pity and help the diſtreſſed, to love enemies, and as there is opportunity, to do good to all, eſpecially to them that are of the houſhold of Faith. We muſt underſtand in this, as well as in the other parts of that ſtamp which the Spirit of God puts on the Souls of men, That the Impreſſion correſponds and anſwers to the Seal, (as hath been ſaid), the inward Communication to the outward Revelation of Gods will; And ſo we find the matter is: For as Divine Precepts require this ſhould be the temper of mens ſpirits, ſo the very things that compoſe and make up that bleſſed temper, are ſaid to be the fruits of his own Spirit;

Gal. 5.22, 23. *The fruit of the Spirit is peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, meekneſs,* &c. And again,

Eph. 5. 9. *The fruit of the ſpirit is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth.* Now hath not that Soul a ſpring of pleaſure within it ſelf, that is in theſe reſpects as God would have it be? That is conſcious to it ſelf of nothing but righteouſneſs, goodneſs, benignity, candor towards

wards any man, and is in all things acted by a ſpirit of love, *that ſuffereth long, and is kind,* 1 Cor. 13. *that envieth not, that vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up, doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not its own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth.* That ſo equally poiſes and acts a mans ſpirit, that he carries ſeemly and ſutably towards all men, *takes pleaſure in the beſt, in the Saints and excellent ones of the earth hath all his delight*; and is no worſe affected, than to wiſh them better, *even towards the very worſt*; neither envies the greateſt, nor deſpiſes the meaneſt; neither is revengeful towards them that injure him, nor unthankful to them that oblige him; that is apt to learn of good men, and to teach the bad, by obſerving and giving the moſt imitable example; That is not undutiful to ſuperiors, nor moroſe and unconverſable towards equals; That lives not to himſelf; Is a common good to all within the ſphere through which his activity can extend it ſelf; That doth good with inclination, from the ſteady propenſion of his own will, and an implanted principle of goodneſs. It is evident, God hath formed ſuch a mans ſpirit unto delight of the pureſt kind, and the beſt ſort of pleaſure; unto which they who are ſtrangers, baniſh it from their own breaſts, by the reſiſtance and grief they give his bleſſed Spirit, thereby making it a ſtran-

a ſtranger there; And by harbouring in their own boſoms their own tormentors, the pride, the wrath, the envy, the malice, the revengefulneſs, the bitterneſs of ſpirit, which as they render them uneaſie and intolerable to all that are about them, ſo moſt of all to themſelves; And which while they prey wherever they range abroad, yet ſtill bite moſt keenly and tormentingly that heart it ſelf wherein they are bred; as poyſonous Vipers gnawing the bowels which incloſe them.

3. *Towards themſelves*; which alſo may be conſidered diſtinctly; For though all the good qualifications we can mention or think of, do *redound to a mans ſelf*, and turn to his own advantage, repoſe and delight, (which it is the deſign of all this diſcourſe to ſhew), yet there are ſome that *more directly terminate* on a mans ſelf, wherein the rectitude we now ſpeak of doth in great part conſiſt: When we are obliged to love others as our ſelves, it ſuppoſes not only an allowable, but a laudable ſelf-love. *Men ſhall praiſe thee when thou doſt well to thy ſelf.* Before this *right ſpirit* be renewed in a man, he doth not only wound himſelf, by blows that are reflected on him, and hurt at the rebound, but by many a *direct* ſtroke; or he lets the wounds feſter and corrupt, to the cure whereof he ſhould with all diligence *directly* apply himſelf. How unpropitious and cruel to themſelves are all unholy perſons! What waſtes and deſolations do they commit and make in their own Souls, by breaking the order God

God and Nature did at firſt ſet and eſtabliſh there? Dethroning their own reaſon and judgment, which ought to bear ſway and govern within them. This baniſhes delight, and drives it far away from them? They ſee what is fitteſt for them to do and ſeek, and run a quite counter-courſe. What ſtorms do they hereby raiſe in their own boſoms! What a torture is it, when a mans own light and knowledg bears a ſtanding teſtimony againſt him, and holds him under a continual doom!

How ill-diſpos'd are men towards themſelves, when they wholly neglect themſelves in one kind, when they too much mind and ſeek themſelves in another; when they too little underſtand themſelves, ſo as not to put a true value on themſelves, but do either *diſeſteem themſelves*, as to their more noble part, in reſpect of that *common excellency* which belongs to them with all other men; or do *over-magnifie themſelves*, and are conceited and too well opinion'd of themſelves, in reſpect of any *peculiar excellency* wherein they imagine they out-ſtrip others? How ill do they treat themſelves in their *ſelf-indulgence*, their gratifying their own ſenſual inclination, with the greateſt danger and damage to their Souls? When they care not at what expence they make proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof? What unkind uſage do they find at their own hands, when they cheriſh and countenance deſires which they cannot gratifie, and raiſe to themſelves expectations

pectations of things not within their own power, which being diſappointed turn into ſo many furies, and in that ſhape take a ſharp revenge upon their own hearts? when they exerciſe no authority and dominion over themſelves, preſerve not the liberty due to what ſhould both be it ſelf free, and ſhould command the reſt in them; Inſlave themſelves to vile and ignominious luſts and paſſions, put out their own eyes, and grind blindfold to the baſeſt and moſt tyrannical Lords, their own ſordid humours and baſe, mean appetites; when though they ſerve more rigorous task-maſters than the *Iſraelites* in *Egypt* did, and are more ſorely beaten by them when their tale is not fulfill'd for want of materials, yet groan not becauſe of their hard bondage, nor affect liberty?

This gracious communication from God, ſets all things in a good degree right within; So that where there was nothing before, but horrid and helliſh darkneſs, diſorder and confuſion, there now ſhines a mild, pleaſant, chearful light, that infers regularity, purity, & peace.

How great is the pleaſure that ariſes from *ſelf-denial* (wherein we do, *duly* and *as we ought*, deny our ſelves); not only as it is an act of duty towards God (of which before,) but as it is an act of juſtice and mercy towards our own ſouls! That is, wherein we make a juſt and *true eſtimate* of our ſelves, do eſteem baſely of our ſelves; wherein we are *really become baſe and vile*: And wherein there is any thing of real value and excellency in our own beings,

beings, we value it only upon that account, and in that ſubordination wherein it is truly valuable!

How pleaſant, when we have learned to forſake and abandon our ſelves, when we are not apt to magnifie and applaud, to truſt or love, to ſeek & ſerve our ſelves *unduly*, and are only inclin'd to own, to cleave and ſtick to our ſelves, wherein and ſo far as we ought! when that Idol *Self* is no longer maintained within us, at the dear expence of our peace, comfort, ſafety, and eternal hope; An Idol that ingroſſed the whole ſubſtance of our Souls, that exhauſted and devour'd the ſtrength and vigour of our ſpirits, which it doth not maintain, and cannot repair; which conſumes our time, which keeps all our powers and faculties in a continual exerciſe and hurry, to make a coſtly, a vain, an unlawful proviſion for it! How great is the eaſe and pleaſure which we feel, in being delivered from that ſoul-waſting Monſter, that was fed and ſuſtain'd at a dearer rate, and with more coſtly ſacrifices and repaſts then can be paralleld by either ſacred or other Hiſtory; That hath made more deſolation in the *ſouls* of men, then ever was made in their Towns & Cities, where Idols were ſerved by only humane ſacrifices, or monſtrous creatures ſatiated with only ſuch refections; Or where the lives & ſafety of the moſt were to be bought out by the conſtant ſucceſſive tribute of the blood of not a few! That hath devoured more, and preyed more cruelly upon human lives than *Molech*, or the *Minotaure*; When this monſtrous

monſtrous Idol is deſtroy'd & trodden down, what a Jubilee doth it make, what ſongs of triumph and praiſe doth it furniſh and ſupply to the poor ſoul, now deliver'd & redeem'd from death and bondage. How much more eaſie and reaſonable a ſervice is it (when once the grace of God and their own experience give men to underſtand it,) to ſtudy to pleaſe him than themſelves? when they feel themſelves dead to
Rom. 6. 11, 12. their former Lord and ſervice, *and only alive to God through Jeſus Chriſt!* when *Sin no longer reigns in their mortal bodies, that they ſhould*
v. 13. *obey it in the luſts thereof*; when they *no more yield their members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin, but have yielded themſelves unto God, as thoſe that are alive from the dead*, &c.!
v, 18. When *being made free from ſin, they are become*
Rom. 8. 2. *ſervants unto righteouſneſs! The law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus having made me free from the law of ſin!* What an eaſe is it to the ſpirit of a man, when he hath not himſelf to ſeek & ſerve and care for in any unlawful diſallowed ſenſe; when he finds not himſelf neceſſitated or urged by his own imperious fleſhly inclination ſo to do; when he perceives himſelf by a prevailing better principle counterpoys'd, and the weight and byaſs of his own Spirit inclines him quite another way; when he finds he hath nothing left him to do, but to ſerve God, to know his will and do it; & is disburdened of all unneceſſary care for himſelf; That which is neceſſary being part of his duty, and is therefore done on purpoſe only for God: and that which is unneceſſary and forbidden (which

part

part only was burdenſome) being ſupplied by (what hath the greateſt eaſe and pleaſure in it imaginable) *truſt* and ſelf-*reſignation* to his pleaſure and will whoſe we wholly are? what life is pleaſant, if this be not! Surely wherein it is attain'd to, it is moſt pleaſant; and hither this gracious heart-rectifying communication is gradually tending.

How great is the pleaſure that ariſes from *Self-government!* When that governs in us which ſhould govern, and that is ſubject and obeys which ſhould obey; when a mans mind is competently furniſhed with directive practical principles, and his heart is ſo framed that it is capable of being preſcribed to, is patient of reſtraints and direction, eaſily obeys the reign and follows the ducture of an inlightened well-inſtructed mind; when the order is maintained between the ſuperior faculties and the inferior, and there are no contentious murmurs of ungovernable appetitions and paſſions againſt the law of the mind: Tis true, that where this holy rectitude doth but in a degree take place, there will be many conflicts, but thoſe conflicts are in order to victory; and how joyful and glorious is the triumph upon that victory! when the ſoul enters upon its εὐχαριστία, its thankſgiving ſong, *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord!* how happy a ſtate is that (wherein at ſome times it is here attained) when there are now no tumults within! *The wicked* (which is the very import of their name) *are as a troubled ſea, that cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.*

dirt. Here is no governing principle in any power; no Scepter, no Trident to check and allay the rage of thoſe waters. But when his power goes forth in the ſoul, whoſe very word Winds and Seas obey, how peaceful and pleaſant a calm doth enſue!

Now is a man *reſtor'd to himſelf*, and is again in his right mind. He is truly now ſaid to *enjoy himſelf*, and upon the beſt terms; that is, he enjoys himſelf in and under God. He is (in a due ſubordination) maſter of himſelf. He poſſeſſes his own Soul; That one piece of holy rectitude [*patience*] inables him
Luk. 21. 19. to do ſo. *In your patience poſſeſs ye your Souls.* Patience is a part of Fortitude, an *ability to ſuffer*; He that is in this reſpect impotent of himſelf, not able to ſuffer, is a perfect ſlave; not a ſlave only to the vicious wills and humours of other men, in whoſe power he apprehends it is to befriend or hurt him; but *firſt* and *chiefly* to his own; he is not maſter of his own judgment, reaſon, and conſcience; but he proſtitutes all in the firſt place, to his own inordinate ſelf-love, his avarice, his fear, and conſequently to the pleaſure of other men, (which upon no other terms and inducements is baſe and vile towards any man, were the *matter in it ſelf* never ſo right, and the obedience as *due to them* as can be ſuppoſed), whereas *if he could ſuffer*, he retain'd his maſtery over himſelf, and were, under God, within his own power. Upon
Col. 1. 11. this, with other grounds, is *joyfulneſs* a companion of *patience*; How much more is it ſo

(*if*

(if to this one part) to the whole frame of that holy rectitude whereby a mans ſpirit is compos'd to a due order within it ſelf; When there is an univerſal ſobriety (or ſoundneſs of mind, as the word that uſes to expreſs ſobriety ſignifies), a continency and dominion of ones ſelf; and the Soul is no longer hurried to and fro, and even outed of it ſelf, by *undue* deſires, fears, angers, ſorrows, *&c.* nor vext by the abſence of and its perverſe ineptitude and indiſpoſition to thoſe which it well knows are *due*; When it finds it ſelf at liberty from the exactions of an unſubdued fleſh, and for the kindly and genuine operations and exerciſes of the divine life. When it is in good meaſure freed from the rackings and tortures that naturally accompany the habitual contrariety of an ungovernable heart to a convinced judgment and conſcience; And is no longer held in pain, by ſuch continual ſelf-upbraidings; *Thou art, and affecteſt to be, what thou knoweſt thou ſhouldſt not; and neither art, nor do'ſt, nor canſt deſire or endure to be, or do, what thou very well knoweſt thou ſhould'ſt.* In that caſe the ſoul is throughout disjointed, and continually grating upon it ſelf. And the eaſe and pleaſure which it finds by this happy change much reſembles that which a mans body, being in ſuch a caſe, feels, when every diſlocated bone is brought back and well-ſettled in its own proper place and order again. How reſentingly doth the Pſalmiſt acknowledg divine goodneſs in this! *He reſtoreth my Soul: and leadeth me in paths* Pſal. 23. 3.

of righteouſneſs, for his names ſake; *q. d.* Now I can walk and act as a ſound man, and the paths of righteouſneſs are become pleaſant and delectable to me, which before I declined, or wherein my halt and maimed Soul was unable to move a ſtep. Now is *heard the voice of joy and gladneſs when the bones which were diſordered and broken rejoyce.*

Pſal. 51.

How great is the joy and pleaſure of *ſelf-activity!* when the Soul is not moved by foreign, improper motives, but finds it ſelf to move freely from an implanted principle of life, that acts it forward in right and plain paths; when it doth, with its own full conſent, what it is convinced it ought without being forcibly drag'd or violently impos'd upon; and is (not a weak, ineffectual, or only ſelf-judging, but) a powerful governing vital Law to it ſelf.

How great pleaſure ariſes from a conſtant diligent *ſelf-inſpection!* when a mans ſpirit dwels within it ſelf, reſides at home, ſeeks not it ſelf abroad; remains within its own bounds, is intent upon it ſelf; watches over its own motions as its proper charge; is formed to a compliance with that Precept, *Keep thy heart with all diligence.* And upon that conſideration, as ſeriouſly weighing that *thence are the iſſues of life*, all vital acts and operations whatſoever will ſavour of the root and principle from whence they proceed, and be as the heart is; good and pure if that be ſo; if otherwiſe, corrupt and naught. To have a ſpirit habituated to the buſineſs of its own

Prov. 4. 23.

Pro-

Province and Territory; Its eyes, not with the fool's in the ends of the earth, but turned inward upon it ſelf. Hence his own vineyard is beſt kept; when the ſluggard's (that neglects himſelf) is wholly over-run with thorns and briars, that cover the face thereof. How forlorn and comfortleſs a ſpectacle hath ſuch a man of his own Soul! The horror whereof is only avoided by (the more hopeleſs courſe of) turning off his eye; as conſcious how ill entertainment is there to be met with. Therefore are ſuch, ſtrangers at home; and are afraid to converſe with themſelves; are better acquainted with the affairs of *France* and *Spain*, or at leaſt of this and that and the other neighbour, than thoſe of their own Souls. And the more things at home are neglected the worſe they grow. *Poverty and deſolation come upon them as an armed man*; that (in this caſe) waſts and makes havock without reſiſtance.

And herein lies much of the heart-rectifying work and power of grace, in diſpoſing and ſetting the heart ſo far right towards it ſelf, as that it may firſt have the *patience* to look inward, and then the *pleaſure* which will afterwards ariſe, moſt naturally, thence. The great averſion hereto of miſgiving hearts is not otherwiſe overcome. But when it is; How do all things flouriſh under ſuch a ones careful, ſelf-reflecting eye! That Soul is as a watered garden. Thither it can invite his preſence who is altogether made up of delights, to come and eat his pleaſant fruits.

And now, retirement and ſolitude become delectable: And a man delightfully aſſociates with himſelf; ſingles out himſelf to be his own companion, as finding *another* always ſtepping in; ſo that he is never leſs alone than when alone. How unſpeakable an happineſs is this, when the great Mediator that undertook to reconcile God to the Soul, ſhall thus have alſo reconciled it to it ſelf! When it ſhall be conſidered, how dreadful the caſe is, when a mans wickedneſs hath transformed him into a *Magor-Miſſabib*, compaſs'd him with affrightments, made him a *terror to himſelf*: It may then be underſtood how grateful a change it is when he is reform'd into a *ſon of peace*, and made a delight to himſelf; when he can recreate himſelf, and refreſh his tired eye, overcharged with beholding the ſad things that everywhere come in view from a world loſt in wickedneſs, by looking into Gods own Plantation within himſelf; and conſidering it under that notion only, he doth not look upon *himſelf* with an eye of *pride*; as he doth not upon *others* with that of *diſdain*. He beholds with a ſort of ſelf-complacency what God hath wrought and done there, not with ſelf-arrogance; as knowing there is a *ſelf* too, upon which he hath ſtill reaſon to look with abhorrence and ſelf-loathing. And though there be now incorporated with him a *better ſelf*, yet that was not of himſelf. He well underſtands who made him differ, not only from others but from himſelf; and put him into that capacity of ſaying that *I am not*

I,

I, I am not who or what I was before. And the more he is uſed to ſuch ſelf-reflection, the more pleaſant it becomes to him; That is, if he confine not his eye too much, to the dark ſide of his own Soul; and do look to the more lightſome ſide with that remembrance (as before) that whatſoever he is, that is good and grateful to behold, he is by grace. He thus grows familiar with himſelf, and the ſight mends as it is oftener beheld; and while it is not obſerved always to do ſo. Yea, though things look many times ſadly and ſometimes dubiouſly; that however, doth but occaſion the accompliſhment of a more diligent ſearch, which engages to more earneſt labour and ſtrugglings with God and with himſelf, which labour is recompenced with a following fruit and pleaſure: Yea, and God is invocated not only for redreſs, but for further ſearch; when ſuch fear leſt they have been too indulgent and partial towards themſelves, and leſt they have not made ſo ſtrict a ſcrutiny as the caſe may poſſibly require; then the requeſt is, *Search and try me, O Lord, ſee if there be any way of wickedneſs in me.* And here the ſincerity which appears in that ſelf-ſuſpicion, and jealouſie over their own Souls, is not without its grateful reliſhes, and a ſecret delight inſinuates and mingles with the appeals which ſuch a Soul makes to Him, whoſe eye is a flame of fire, ſearches hearts and tries reins. And it is ſome pleaſure, however, to find that diſpoſition in their own

Souls, that they are throughly willing to know themſelves, and deſire not to ſhun and decline the ſearch of that fiery flaming eye.

Thus then upon all accounts this divine communication is delectable, as it tends to rectifie mens diſpoſitions *towards themſelves*, and to ſet them right in their inclinations and poſture in reference to *their own Souls.* We may add,

4. It contributes much to the matter of delight, *as it ſets mens ſpirits right in their diſpoſitions towards this and the other world*; the preſent and future ſtate of things. How great a work is neceſſary to be done in this reſpect, wherein things are ſo monſtrouſly out of courſe; and men become thereby not ſtrangers only to true delight and pleaſure, but even uncapable of any ſuch reliſhes till the matter be redreſt! How vitiated and unexerciſed are mens ſenſes as to theſe things, and unable to diſcern between good and evil! Their *groſſer ſenſe* is utterly *incompetent*, and a *ſpiritual more refin'd ſenſe* is *wanting*; Therefore do they judg, and chuſe, and love, and purſue only as that moſt incompetent and injudicious principle doth direct, *That* is appeal'd to in all caſes: All their meaſures are taken from thence; and *that* only is called *good*, which to their ſenſual imagination, tinctur'd by the earthlineſs and carnality of their hearts, appears ſo; *that evil*, of which the ſame principle doth ſo pronounce; according hereto is the whole bent and inclination of their Souls. And they are only induenc'd and govern'd by the powers of this

ſenſible

ſenſible world; this preſent evil world, the faſhion whereof (yea it and the luſts thereof together) are paſſing away. And the things of the world to come have no power with them; no motives from thence ſignifie any thing. They are only ſteer'd in their whole courſe by the apprehenſion they have of advantages or diſadvantages in reference to their preſent ſecular concernments. They love this world, and the things of this world; mind earthly things, and are not ſtartled when they are ſo plainly told, that men of this character *have not the love of the Father in them*, and *are enemies to the croſs of Chriſt*, and that *their end will be deſtruction*. 'Tis a death to them to think of dying; not from the fear of what may enſue (they have Atheiſm enough to ſtifle ſuch fear), but from the love of their earthly ſtations, and that vile earthly body in which they dwell.

But how delightful a thing is the change which this rectifying communication makes! How pleaſant to live in this world as a Pilgrim and Stranger, ſeeking ſtill the better, the heavenly Country! To behold the various inticements which are here offered to view at, ſometimes without inclination towards them; the frightful aſpect and appearance of things at other times without commotion; Is not this delectable? To dwell apart from this world in the midſt of it; In the ſecret of the Almighty, under his pavilion, as one of his hidden ones, with-drawn from the commu- Pſal. 27. rion of this world to his own communion;

Pſal. 91.

ſo ſevered and cut off from this world, as not to partake in the ſpirit of it, or be acted thereby; but by another, a greater and more mighty, as well as a purer and more holy Spirit; *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* And again, *We have received not the ſpirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God.* Which things the divine Spirit diſpoſes the Soul to, and unites it with, when it disinclines and diſjoins it from this world and the things thereof; and thereby diſcovers this Soul to be quite of another *community* from that of this world, *viz.* of an *heavenly community*, unto which thoſe better and more excellent things do ly in common, as their portion and inheritance. What matter of Joy and Glorying is it, when one is crucified to this world, and this world to him; when the world appears to him a crucified thing, *i. e.* an accurſed, hateful, deteſtable thing, (which is one notion of *crucify'd*), ſuch a thing as he can deſpiſe and hate; which he is as little apt to be fond of, as one would be of a loathſom carcaſe hanging upon an ignominious Croſs. And when he can feel himſelf crucified towards it, *i.e.* dead (another notion of it), disinclin'd, without ſenſe, breath, pulſe, motion, or appetite; not ſo dead as to be without any kind of life, but without that baſe, low, ſordid kind of life by which he *lived to it*, and in its converſes and embraces. So much of delectation doth this infer, as even to endear

1 Joh. 4. 4.

1 Cor. 2. 12.

Gal. 6.

the

the very croſs it ſelf (that hateful horrid thing) by which it is effected. But that carries a farther ſignification with it, to be fetcht more expreſly from other Scriptures; The croſs is it ſelf render'd amiable, and a thing to be gloried in, to be lookt on with delight and pleaſure, upon the account of the deſign and end of that Tragedy which was acted thereon; within which deſign (being executed and accompliſhed) this happy effect is included. We elſewhere find the Apoſtle expreſſing his vehement deſire *to know Chriſt and the power of his reſurrection, and* (in order thereto) *the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable to his death.* Phil. 3. v. 10. But what did he laſtly aim at in this? The next words more fully ſpeak out (what he firſt mentioned) *the power of his reſurrection* to be the thing chiefly in his eye, and that he deſired (what he adds) *the fellowſhip of his ſufferings*, &c. as a means unto that end, though it ſeem'd a ſharp and painful means; *If by any means I might attain the reſurrection of the dead*; v. 11. *q. d.* I care not what I undergo, not the ſufferings even of a painful crucifixion it ſelf, or that my worldly earthly Self do ſuffer conformably to the ſufferings of my crucify'd Lord; I matter not by what ſo ſevere method the thing be brought about, if by any means it may be brought about, that I may know *the power of his reſurrection* ſo feelingly, as to attain alſo *the reſurrection of the dead.* And what was that? No doubt to attain a ſtate (which he confeſſes he had not

not yet perfectly attain'd, but was in purſuit of) ſutable to his relation and union with a riſen Jeſus; Union with him ſuppoſes a being riſen with him; *If ye then be riſen with*
Col. 1. 3. *Chriſt---.* It is taken as a granted thing, that they that are his are riſen with him. And what ſtate and temper of ſpirit would be ſutable to that ſuppoſition? The next words ſhew, *Seek thoſe things that are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection* (or mind) *on the things above, not on the things on the earth.* Then follows the method in which they were brought to the capacity of doing ſo; *For ye are dead.* Their profeſſed relation to Chriſt did ſuppoſe them riſen, and did therefore firſt ſuppoſe them dead. Now if they would do ſutably to what their profeſſion imported, this was it they had to do; To abſtract their minds and hearts from the things of this earth, and place them upon the things of an higher region. And (as its afterwards expreſſed in this ſame context which we were conſidering be-
Phil. 3. 20. fore) *to have our converſation* (or Citizenſhip) *in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour, &c.* That is, as our chief intereſts and priviledges are above, to have our thoughts and the powers of our Souls chiefly exerciſed upon that bleſſed and glorious ſtate, which ſtate
v. 14. is *the prize* (mentioned above) *of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* It being the ſcope and import of his Call unto us, and the very deſign of his ſufferings on the Croſs, to draw up a people from earth to heaven; whence

whence therefore they that under this Call do ſtill *mind earthly things*, are ſaid to be *enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt*; the great incongruity whereof the Apoſtle even reſents with tears as he there teſtifies. And it was in this, that he was for his part ſo willing to comply with the deſign of the Croſs, that he made no difficulty to endure all the *hardſhip and dolour of it*, that he might attain this glorious fruit and gain which he reckoned ſhould accrew to him from it; even *more of a rais'd heavenly mind*, which ſignify'd it to be *ſtrongly* bent that way already; when no mortifications were reckoned too ſevere to be undergone in order thereto. And here therefore this, *ſoul-rectifying influence* muſt be underſtood to have been proportionably ſtrong. Ver. 18. 19.

Hence alſo it was that we find him groaning as one under a preſſure or heavy weight to be cloath'd upon with the heavenly houſe: *and to have mortality ſwallowed up of life*: Becauſe God had *wrought him to this ſelf-ſame thing*, ſo bent and determined his ſpirit was towards the bleſſedneſs of the future ſtate (which ſeems the moſt natural contexture of diſcourſe here, though ſome others have underſtood it otherwiſe) as that, though he could bear patiently the delay, he could not but deſire moſt earneſtly to be there. 2 Cor. 5. v. 4. v. 5.

And we ſee how the temper of the Primitive Chriſtians was, as to this, and the other world, in thoſe days when the Spirit was plentifully poured out. *They took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, knowing in themſelves, they* Heb. 10. 34.

they had in Heaven a far better and an enduring ſubſtance. Heaven ſignified much with them, and this world very little. *They looked not to the things that were ſeen and temporal, but to the things unſeen and eternal.* As thoſe former Worthies did, whoſe minds and hearts, being ſet right by that faith, which is *the ſubſtance of the things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen.* They lived as pilgrims and ſtrangers on earth, deſpiſed the pleaſures, riches and honours of it. Endured all manner of hardſhips and tortures in it, not accepting deliverance, becauſe they were taken up in the purſuit of the better Country; had reſpect to the recompence of reward; and expected a part in the better Reſurrection.

2 Cor. 4. *ult.*

Heb. 11.

And is it not a delightful thing to the ſpirit of a man when he is ſenſibly diſintangled, and at liberty from the cares, deſires, griefs and fears that were wont to enwrap his heart? when he finds his weights and clogs faln off, that depreſt him, the bonds and ſnares looſed which bound him down to this earth; and feels himſelf aſcending and moving upwards; out of that darkneſs, ſtupidity and death that poſſeſſed his Soul, into that upper region of light, purity and peace, unto which his ſpirit is ſtill gradually more and more connaturallized day by day? When Heaven in reſpect of the pure holineſs, the calm ſerenity, the reſt and bleſſedneſs of it, is now grown familiar to him, and his very element?

We ſee then, that in all theſe mentioned reſpects

reſpects this gracious communication, *wherein* it is rectifying, and tends to ſettle the Soul in that frame *which it ought to be in*, and which is moſt proper and natural to it; *therein* it is alſo moſt delightful, and carries higheſt matter of pleaſure in it.

It is upon the whole (that we may ſum up the account, of this divine communication in the following characters of it);

1. *Generative*, and begets the Soul to a new, a divine life; makes it of a ſluggiſh, ſtupid dead thing (as it was towards all heavenly and divine matters) living and ſprightly, full of active life and vigour. Life we ſay is ſweet, it is in it ſelf a pleaſant thing. This mean, bodily life it ſelf is ſo; if we do but conſider it, and allow our ſelves to taſte and enjoy the pleaſure of it. As for inſtance, that this and that limb and member is not a dead lump, that we feel life freſhly ſprouting and ſpringing in every part, is not this delightſom? How much more the life of the Soul! eſpecially this ſo excellent and ſublime kind of life!

And it is the radical principle of all other (conſequent) pleaſure, that by which we are capable thereof; every thing is ſapleſs and without ſavour to the dead. How pleaſant operations and fruitions doth the divine life render a perſon capable of!

2. It is *Nutritive*. Souls are nouriſhed by the ſame thing by which they are begotten, by the ſame divine influence. As a generative vertue is wont to be attributed to the Sun, ſo it che-

cheriſhes alſo its own productions. The beams
Mal. 4. 2. of that *Sun of righteouſneſs* make them that fear God grow up as calves in the ſtall, fill them with marrow and fatneſs, cauſe them to flouriſh as the Cedars of *Lebanon*. And is not that delightſome to be increaſed daily with the increaſes of God? fed with heavenly hidden Manna, Angels food; and thereby (though we need not here ſpeak diſtinctly of theſe) to receive at once both nouriſhment and growth?

3. It is *Sanative*, and virtually contains all the fruits in it which are for the healing of the Nations; when the Soul grows diſtemper'd, it reſtores it, and is both ſuſtaining and remedying to it. How great is the pleaſure of health and ſoundneſs! of eaſe to broken bones! of relief to a ſick and fainting heart! ſo it is often (for in the preſent ſtate the cure is not perfect and relapſes are frequent) with the Soul in which the life of God hath begun to ſettle and diffuſe it ſelf, till his influence repair and renew it; And when it doth ſo, how pleaſant is it to find an heart made ſound in his ſtatutes! and to perceive a-new working in it the Spi-
2 Cor. 4. rit of love, power and a *ſound mind!* So pleaſant that it occaſions a triumph (even when the outward man is periſhing) if it be found that the inward is renewed day by day.

4. It is *Corroborative* and ſtrengthening; confirms reſolutions, and eſtabliſhes the heart. Hereby they who have felt this quickening, cheriſh-

cheriſhing, healing vertue are alſo ſtrengthen'd with might (*viz.* by the Spirit) in the inner man; ſo that they hold on their way, and being of clean hands, grow ſtronger and ſtronger. They go from ſtrength to ſtrength; and do not ſo much ſpend, as increaſe it by going forward. For the way it ſelf of the Lord *is ſtrength to the upright.* He provides that freſh recruits ſhall ſtill ſpring up to them in their way. For all their ſupplies are of him, and are acknowledged to be ſo; In as much as by *waiting upon the Lord they renew ſtrength* and mount up with wings as Eagles, run without wearineſs, and walk without fainting. And this increaſing ſtrength cannot be without a proportionably increaſing delight. How pleaſantly doth the ſtrong man rejoyce to run his race! and enterprize even difficult and hazardous things! By *this ſtrength* doth the regenerate man perform the ordinary duties belonging to his holy profeſſion; by it he encounters difficulties, combats and conquers enemies, bears heavy and afflicting preſſures, and none of theſe without ſome intermingled pleaſure. For even *that exerciſe* of this ſtrength which is likely to be leaſt accompanied with pleaſure, *the ſuffering of ſharp and ſmarting afflictions*, hath many times much of this grateful mixture; and can only be expected to have it in this way of gracious communication, as the depending ſufferers ſhall be ſtrengthened with all might according to the glorious power of God, unto all patience and long-ſuffering *with joyfulneſs.*

Job 17. 9.

Pſal. 84.

Prov. 10.

Iſa. 40.

Col. 1. 11.

God

God is therefore to be enjoy'd and delighted in by this delectable communication intervening, by which he now frames the Soul according to his own Image, and gives an heart after his own heart, that is, *ſuch as is ſutable to him*, and *as he would have it be.* And this way only is any one in a poſſibility to delight in God, *by having a good frame of Spirit communicated to him*, and inwrought in him; I mean never without this, and in a great meaſure by it. Then is he in a happy ſtate, when God hath by his own Spirit *made him* what by his Word he *requires him* to be. Now is he compos'd to delights and bleſſedneſs, being by the ſame workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus both to *good works* and to the *beſt of enjoyments.* How happy is that Soul in whom the true matter of delight is become an *implanted thing*! that is what it ſhould be, and ſhould be nothing (ſuch is the conſtitution of Goſpel-Rules and Precepts) but what moſt truly makes for its own content, delight, and reſt! whoſe own temper is now in ſome ſort become to it both a *law* and a *reward*! Surely this is one great part of what an enlightened apprehenſive Soul would moſt earneſtly deſire and crave, or would be the genuine breathings of a ſincerely gracious heart. O that I were more like God! more perfectly framed according to his holy will! And muſt therefore be, in great part, a thing apt to afford it delight and reſt; as hath been already inculcated before.

But

But yet this natural conſequence is little underſtood. And the common ignorance or inadvertency of this, hath made it neceſſary to inſiſt the more largely (though but little have been ſaid in reſpect of what might) on this part of the delectable communication wherein God offers himſelf to his peoples enjoyment. For from the not-knowing, or not-conſidering of this way of enjoying him, this twofold miſtake (the one of very dangerous, the other of uncomfortable importance and tendency) hath ariſen.

1. That ſome have thought they have enjoy'd God when they have not; having only had their imaginations ſomewhat gratified, by certain, either falſe or ineffectual notions of him. In which they have reſted, and placed the ſum of their Religion and Happineſs. Never aiming, in the mean time, to have their ſpirits reformed according to that pure and holy Image and *Exemplar* which he hath repreſented in the Goſpel of his Son; the impreſſion whereof, is, *Chriſt formed in us.*

2. That others have thought they have not enjoyed God when they have; ſuppoſing there was no enjoyment of him, but what conſiſted in the rapturous tranſporting apprehenſion and perſwaſion of his *particular love to them*; and ſleightly overlooking all that work he hath wrought in their Souls, as if it were nothing to be accounted of, not allowing themſelves to reflect on any thing in themſelves, but what was ſtill amiſs; and vainly ſeeking with much anxiety and com-

plaint what they have, while they will not take notice that they have it, nor apply themſelves to improve the already implanted Principles that are, *in themſelves*, apt to yield fruits of ſo pleaſant reliſh.

It was upon this account requiſite to diſcover, and labour ſomewhat to magnifie the *intrinſecal delightfulneſs of Religion it ſelf*; and to put the more of note and remark upon a *well-tempered ſpirit*, even in point of delectableneſs and the matter of pleaſure it hath in it, by how much it is with too many, on one account or another, a neglected thing.

There is only ſomewhat of doubt, or objection that may poſſibly lie in the minds of ſome againſt the ſcope and drift of this Diſcourſe; which it will be needful we endeavour to remove before we proceed to what is further contained in this *gracious communication*: As,

1. 1. It may be ſaid, *Doth not all this tend to bring us, inſtead of delighting in God, to delight in our ſelves? To make us become our own center and reſt? And how can the reliſhable ſweetneſs of gracious principles and diſpoſitions ſignifie Gods being to be enjoyed or delighted in?* For what, are theſe things God?

To this I only ſay: 1. That ſuch *holy diſpoſitions* as they are not *God*, ſo nor are *they*, in ſtrictneſs of ſpeech, *our ſelves*. And how abſurd were it, to call every thing *our ſelves* that is *in us*! And how ſelf-contradicting then were the very objection! for that would make *delighting in God* and in

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our ſelves directly all one; and ſo the fault which it cauſleſly pretends to find, it would really commit. 'Tis true, that improperly *holy diſpoſitions* are ſaid to make up *another ſelf* in us, a *new man*, according as *corrupt* and *ſinful principles* and *diſpoſitions* do make alſo a *ſelf*, the *old man*. But then it is alſo to be remembered, that with no greater impropriety they are capable of bearing the name of *God*; as the image of any thing frequently doth the name of the thing which it repreſents, or the *work* of its *Author*: And they are expreſly called, *Chriſt formed in us*; and is not he God? They are called *the Spirit*; for when we are caution'd not to *quench the Spirit*, how can that be underſtood of the eternal uncreated *Spirit* himſelf? And the very thing produced (not meerly the productive influence) in the work of Regeneration is expreſly called by that name (as it is no ſuch ſtrange thing for the effect to carry the name of its cauſe); *That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.* There is Spirit begetting, and Spirit begotten. And the Spirit begotten, as it muſt be diſtinguiſhed from its *cauſe*, the Spirit of God; ſo it muſt from the *ſubject* wherein the effect is wrought, *our own Spirits*; For they ſure are not produc't by the regenerating work. Yea, and when God is ſaid *to dwell in them that dwell in love*, and that are *humble* and *contrite*; ſomewhat elſe is thereby ſignify'd to be indwelling there, than the meer *being* of God; for otherwiſe the priviledg of ſuch were no Joh. 3. 6.

greater than of all other men and things. And what elſe is it, but ſomewhat communicated and imparted immediately from God to ſuch? (elſe how by *dwelling in love*, do they *dwell in God?*) which becauſe *dwelling* imports *permanency*, cannot be a tranſient influence only, but ſome ſettled abiding effect, a conſiſtent frame and temper of Spirit, maintained by his continually renewed influence; and therefore it would be very unreaſonably ſaid, that the repreſenting this as delectable is a calling us off from God to delight in our ſelves. For if this communication be not it ſelf, in ſtrict propriety, *God*, it were as great impropriety to ſay it were *our ſelves*. Again,

2. It hath a great deal more affinity with God than with us. *We* are, its true, the *ſubjects* of it; but it is *his immediate production* and very *likeneſs*, a Divine nature, no humane thing. Therefore if here our delight were to terminate, it were more proper to call it delighting in God than in our ſelves. But,

3. It is neither ſaid nor meant, that here our delight is to terminate; but that *hereby* we are to delight *in God*, and ſo that our delight is to *terminate in him.*

4. When we are ſaid to *enjoy God*, I inquire, *Is any thing communicated to us, or no?* If not, we have no enjoyment; If any thing be, what is it? Gods Eſſence? That's impoſſible and horrid to think, as hath been ſaid. And we need not repeat, that when we can tell what it is to enjoy a Friend, without partaking his eſſence,

eſſence, whoſe communications are ſo incomparably more remote, mediate, reſiſtible; It is leſs difficult to conceive, how God is to be enjoy'd by his communications.

2. It may be again ſaid; *But if God be thus to be delighted in, how can delighting in him be upon ſuch terms our duty? For is it our duty that he communicate himſelf in this way to us?* 2.

Let any that object thus, only ſtudy the meaning of thoſe Precepts; *Keep your ſelves in the love of God. Continue in his goodneſs. Be ye fill'd with the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit.* And if they can think them to ſignifie any thing, they will not be to ſeek for an anſwer. But to this more hereafter; when from the delightful object, we come to treat of actual delighting in it.

3. But ſome may ſay, *It were indeed to be acknowledged, that ſuch a temper of ſpirit once communicated, were indeed very delightful; But where is it to be found? And to ſtate the matter of delight ſo much in what is to be ſought in our ſelves, is to reduce the whole buſineſs of delighting in God, to an impoſſibility, or to nothing: So little appearing of this temper, and ſo much of the contrary, as gives much cauſe of doubt, whether there be any thing to be rejoiced in or no. And what then? Are we to ſuſpend the exerciſe of this duty till we have gotten the difficult caſe reſolved?* (which may be all our time). [*Is there a real thorough work of God upon my Soul or no?*] *For how can I rejoice in that whereof I have yet a doubt,* 3.

whether it be what it ſeems or no?

I anſwer, 1. It is plain, they that really have nothing of this communication from God, cannot take delight in it (otherwiſe than as hoped for). But,

2. Would we therefore have ſuch to pleaſe themſelves and be ſatisfied without it; and delight in their diſtance and eſtrangement from God; and while there is no intercourſe between him and them? And ſhall this be called too *delighting in God*? Surely ſomewhat elſe than *delight* belongs to their ſtates.

3. But for ſuch as *really have it*, That which hath been deſigned to be evinced, is, that it is *delectable in it ſelf*; and therefore they cannot be without any taſte or reliſh of pleaſure therein; while yet ſome doubt touching the ſincerity and truth thereof doth yet remain: Though ſuch doubt (but more their imperfect reception of this communication, and neglect to look after further degrees of it) cannot but render their delight comparatively little.

Nor hath it been deſigned to ſpeak hitherto, of what delight the regenerate in this way *actually have*, but what they *may have*; and what *matter of delight* Gods heart-rectifying communication doth *in the nature of it* contain; that is, *ſuppoſing* it were imparted and received, ſo as actually to have formed the Soul according to the Goſpel-revelation. And if it were ſo in a more eminent meaſure and degree, it were then *in it ſelf* ſo delectable, as without the aſſurance of

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our future ſafe and happy ſtate (though *that*, in that caſe, is not likely to be in a comfortable degree wanting), that is, not *by it only*, but *by it ſelf*, without the preſent conſtant neceſſary concurrence thereof, to afford unſpeakable pleaſure to that Soul in which it hath place. So that the getting of aſſurance is not the *only thing* to be done in order to a perſons *delighting in God*; (of which more hereafter is intended to be ſaid in the directive Part).

But though that be not the *only thing*, yet it is a very *great thing*; and being ſuperadded, makes a great addition to the matter of delight: Therefore we further ſay,

III. This divine communication is delectable as it includes in it, *the manifeſtation of Gods love to the Soul in particular.*

Nor do we hereby intend an *Enthuſiaſtical aſſurance*; or ſuch a teſtification of the love of God to the Soul, as excludes any reference to his external revelation and exerciſe of our own enlightened reaſon and judgment thereupon; or wherein theſe are of no uſe, nor have ſubſervience thereto: But as in the other parts of the divine communication, his external revelation hath the place of an inſtrument, whereby he effects the work inwardly done upon the mind and heart, and of a rule or meaſure whereby we are to judg of it; ſo we are to account it is, as to this part of it alſo; that is, he inwardly teſtifies and manifeſts the ſame thing which is virtually contained in his Goſpel-revela-

tion, conſidered in that reference and aſpect which it hath on the preſent ſtate of the Soul. For that outward Revelation muſt needs be underſtood to ſignifie diverſly to particular perſons, as their ſtate may be divers; As when it ſays, *The things that eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor have entred into the heart of man, God hath prepared for them that love him.* To a perſon that doth indeed truly love God, it virtually ſays, *all theſe things are prepared for thee*: To one that doth not love God, it can only be underſtood to ſay, all theſe things *may be thine*, *i. e.* if thou ſhalt love him; If thou do not, thou haſt no part in them; but in as much as a conditional promiſe, when the condition is performed, is equivalent to an abſolute; Theſe words do as truly import this ſenſe to one that loves God [*theſe things are thine*], as if they were directed to it in particular: As *truly*, I ſay, ſuppoſing the perſon do truly love God, but not ſo *clearly* or with that evidence. For this Truth, (ſuppoſing it a Truth), *I do ſincerely love God*, is not ſo evident as this, *That ſuch preparation is made for them that do*: For this is expreſly contained in the Word of God; The other is not ſo, but to be collected only by ſelf-inſpection, and obſervation of the bent and tenor of my ſpirit and way Godward; yet however the evidence of truth admits of degrees, Truth it ſelf doth not. All things that are true, are equally true. And therefore, when it is ſaid, ſo great things are prepared for *them that love God*; It is as *truly* ſaid, they

1 Cor. 2. 9.

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are prepared for *this man who loves God*, as this or that particular *lover of God* is contained in the general notion of a *lover of him*. And then, as that publick declaration ſays not to any, *theſe things are prepared for you*, whether you love God or no, or otherwiſe than as they come under that common notion of *lovers of God*; This inward manifeſtation is alſo ſo accommodate to that, as that it ſays not *another thing*, but *the ſame*; that is, nothing that contradicts (and indeed no more than is virtually contained in) the other; or it applies what is generally ſaid of the lovers of God to this particular lover of him *as ſuch*; that is, enabling him to diſcern himſelf a *lover of him*, impreſſes this Truth powerfully upon the heart, *theſe great preparations belong to thee, as thou art ſuch a one.*

We ſpeak not here of what God *can do*, but *what he doth.* Who can doubt but as God can, if he pleaſe, imprint *on the mind* the whole Syſtem of neceſſary *Truth*, and *on the heart* the entire frame of *holineſs*, without the help of an external revelation; ſo he can imprint this particular perſwaſion alſo without any outward means?

Nor do we ſpeak of what *he more rarely doth*, but of what he doth ordinarily; or what his more uſual courſe and way of procedure is, in dealing with the ſpirits of men. The ſupream Power binds not its own hands. We may be ſure, *the inward teſtimony of the Spirit never is oppoſite to the outward teſtimony of his Goſpel* (which is the Spirits teſtimony alſo

alſo); and therefore it never ſays to an unholy man, an enemy to God, *thou art in a reconcil'd and pardoned ſtate.* But we cannot be ſure he never ſpeaks or ſuggeſts things to the ſpirits of men but *by the external teſtimony*, ſo as to make uſe of that as the means of informing them with what He hath to impart; Nay, we know he ſometime hath imparted things (as to Prophets and the Sacred Pen-men) without any external means, and (no doubt) excited ſutable affections in them, to the import of the things imparted and made known.

Nor do I believe it can ever be proved, That he *never* doth immediately teſtifie his own ſpecial love to holy Souls without the intervention of ſome part of his external Word, made uſe of as a *preſent* inſtrument to that purpoſe, or that he *always* doth it, in the way of methodical reaſoning therefrom.

Nor do I think that the experience of Chriſtians can ſignifie much to the deciding of the matter. For beſides that this, or that, or a third perſons experience cannot conclude any thing againſt a fourth's; and the way of arguing were very infirm, what one or two or a thouſand, or even the greater part of ſerious Chriſtians (even ſuch as have attain'd to ſome ſatisfying evidence of their own good eſtate) have not found, that no-where is to be found: Beſides that I ſay, it's likely few can diſtinctly tell how it hath been with them in this matter; that is, what way or method hath been taken with them in begetting a *preſent*

ſent perſwaſion at this or that time of Gods peculiar love *to them.* His dealings with perſons (even the ſame perſons at divers times) may be ſo various; his illapſes and coming in upon them at ſome times may have been ſo ſudden and ſurprizing; the motions of thoughts are ſo quick; the obſervation or animadverſion perſons uſually have of what is tranſacted in their own ſpirits is ſo indiſtinct; and they may be ſo much taken up with the *thing it ſelf,* as leſs to mind the way and order of doing it, that we may ſuppoſe little is to be gathered *thence* towards the ſettling of a ſtated rule in this caſe. Nor is the matter of ſuch moment, that we need either be curious in enquiring or poſitive in determining about it; that Principle being once ſuppoſed and firmly ſtuck to;

That he never ſays any thing in this matter by his Spirit to the hearts of men, repugnant to what the ſame Spirit hath ſaid in his Word; Or, That he doth not ſay a new or a diverſe thing from what he hath ſaid there for their aſſurance: that is, That he never teſtifies to any perſon by his Spirit that he is accepted and beloved of him, who may at the ſame time be concluded by his publiquely-extant conſtitutions in his Word to be in a ſtate of non-acceptance and diſfavour; or concerning whom the ſame thing (*viz.* his acceptance) might not be concluded by his Word, if it were duly applied to his caſe. Hereby the moſt momentous danger in this matter is avoided; For if that Principle be forelaid, enough

nough is done to preclude the vain boaſts of ſuch as may be apt to pretend highly to great manifeſtations of divine love, while they carry with them manifeſt proofs of an unſanctified heart, and are under the power of unmortified reigning ſin. That Principle admitted, will convince that their boaſted manifeſtations, do only manifeſt their own ignorance, pride and vanity; or proceed only from their heated imagination, or (the worſe cauſe) Satanical illuſion, deſigned to lull them aſleep in ſin, and the more eaſily to lead them blind-fold to perdition. And this is the main concernment about which we need to be ſolicitous in this matter: which being provided for; as it is difficult, ſo it is not neceſſary to determine, whether the Spirit do always not only teſtifie *according to* the external revelation, but *by it* alſo; and ſo only as to concur in the uſual way of reaſoning from it.

No doubt but the ſame Truth may be aſſented to upon divers grounds; ſometimes upon rational evidence; ſometimes upon teſtimony: And ſome Truths may be ſeen by immediate mental intuition (as being ſelf-evident) which alſo may be capable of demonſtration. And though this Truth of Gods particular love to ſuch a man, be none of thoſe that have ſelf-evidence: Yet Gods Spirit, as it may by aſſiſting the diſcurſive faculty help us to diſcern the connexions of ſome things which otherwiſe we ſhould not perceive; ſo it may by aſſiſting the intuitive, make things evident to us that of themſelves are not,

not. Nor yet, alſo, *that it actually doth ſo*, can any I believe certainly tell; For admit that at ſome times ſome have very tranſporting apprehenſions of the love of God towards themſelves, ſuggeſted to their hearts by the holy Spirit; they having this habitual knowledg before that *love to him* (for inſtance) or *faith in him*, or the like, are deſcriptive characters of the perſons whom he accepts and (delightfully) loves; How ſuddenly may the divine light irradiate, or ſhine upon thoſe preconceived notions (which were begotten in them by the interveniency of the external revelation before) and excite thoſe before-implanted principles of Faith, Love, &c. ſo as to give them the lively ſenſe of them now ſtirring and acting in their hearts? And thence alſo inable them unwaveringly to conclude (and with an unexpreſſible joy and pleaſure) their own intereſt in his ſpecial love, in this way ſhedding it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt given to them? This may be ſo ſuddenly done that they may apprehend the teſtimony to be immediate when indeed it is not. Rom. 5. 5.

Nor are they able to prove from Scripture the immediateneſs of it; For as to what it doth to them in particular, Scripture ſays nothing, they not being ſo much as mentioned there: What it doth or hath done to this or that perſon there mentioned ſignifies nothing to their caſe; if any thing were ſaid that muſt have that import (which will be hard to evince), and that it is any where in Scripture

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ſignified to be its *uſual way*, in common, towards them on whoſe hearts it impreſſes this perſwaſion, to do it immediately; is much leſs to be evinced. For what Scripture ſaith ſo? and that famous Text that ſpeaks ſo directly to this matter; *The Spirit of God beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God*, ſeemeth rather to imply the contrary: In as much as the Spirit of God is there expreſly ſaid to co-witneſs with our ſpirit (as the word there uſed ſignifies) by which it ſhould ſeem to take the ſame courſe in teſtifying which our ſpirit or conſcience doth, that is, of conſidering the general characters of his children laid down in his Word, reflecting upon the ſame in our ſelves, and thereupon concluding we are his children: Which if it were ſuppos'd the only thing the Spirit of God ordinarily doth in this matter, we may with much confidence aſſert;

1. *That it doth herein no ſmall thing*; for is it a ſmall thing to be aſcertain'd of Gods *fatherly* love to us as his own children?

2. *That it doth not a leſs thing* than if it teſtify'd the ſame matter in a way altogether immediate. For wherein is it leſs? Is the matter leſs *important*? that cannot be ſaid; for the *thing* we are aſſured of is the *ſame*, howſoever we be certify'd thereof. Is it leſs evident? That can with as little pretence be ſaid; For doth any one account a thing *not evident in it ſelf*, and that needs to be proved to him, ſome way or other, the leſs evident for being proved to him in a diſcurſive way:

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What pretence can any one have to ſay or think ſo? Is it that reaſoning is more liable to error and miſtake? But I hope the reaſoning of Gods Spirit is not ſo, when *it* enables us to apprehend the general Truth we ſhould reaſon from; to aſſume to it; to collect and conclude from it, guiding us *by its own light*: In each of theſe ſurely we have as much reaſon to rely upon the certainty and infallibility of the Spirits reaſonings as of its moſt aſſertory dictates; Otherwiſe, we would (moſt unreaſonably) think the authority of thoſe concluſions laid down in the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, and other parts of Scripture, invalidated by the Holy Ghoſt's vouchſafing to reaſon them out to us, as we know it moſt nervouſly and ſtrongly doth.

Or, is it leſs *conſolatory*? That cannot be, for that depends on the two former, the *importance* and *evidence* of the thing declared: The former whereof is the ſame, the latter not leſs.

3. Yea and ſuppoſing that the Holy Ghoſt do manifeſtly concur with our ſpirits in the ſeveral ſteps of that diſcurſive way, ſo that we can obſerve it to do ſo, (and there is little doubt but it may do ſo as obſervably to us, by affording a more than ordinary light to aſſiſt and guide us in each part of that procedure, as if it did only ſuggeſt a ſudden dictate to us and no more), we may upon that ſuppoſition add, *That it doth hereby more advantageouſly propoſe the ſame thing to us*, than if it only did it the other way.

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It doth it in a way *more ſutable to our natures*, which is not nothing; and it doth it in a way *leſs liable to after-ſuſpicion and doubt*; for it is not ſuppoſed to be always dictating the ſame thing. And when it ceaſes to do ſo, howſoever conſolatory and ſatisfying the dictate was at that inſtant when it was given, the matter is liable to queſtion afterwards, upon what grounds was ſuch a thing ſaid? And though it cannot be diſtruſted, that what the Holy Spirit teſtifieth is true; yet I may doubt whether it was indeed the Holy Spirit that teſtify'd it or no. Whereas if it proceeded with me upon grounds, *they* remain, and I have no reaſon to ſuſpect that which was argued out to me, upon grounds which I ſtill find in me, was either from an ill ſuggeſtor, or with an ill deſign; whereas there may be ſome plauſible pretence of doubt in the matter, if there was only a tranſient dictate given in to me, without any reference or appeal to that rule by which God hath not only directed me to try my ſelf, but alſo to try ſpirits whether they be of him or no.

Nor is there any imaginable neceſſity of aſſigning quite another method to the Spirits work as it is a Spirit of Adoption, from that which it holds as it is a Spirit of Bondage: For, as to this latter, when it convinces a perſon and binds down the condemning ſentence upon him; this ſurely is the courſe it follows, to let a perſon ſee (for inſtance) *they that live after the fleſh ſhall die*; But thou liveſt

liveſt after the fleſh, therefore thou ſhalt dye: Or, *all that believe not, the wrath of God abides on them*; But thou believeſt not (as it is we know the Spirits work, to convince of not-believing), *therefore the wrath of God abides on thee.* And what need is there of apprehending its *method* to be quite another in its *comforting-work*? Nor is it ſurely a matter of leſs difficulty to perſwade *ſome* that they are *unbelievers*, and make them apprehend and feel the *terror* ſutable to their ſtates; than *others*, that they are *believers*, and make them apprehend the *comfort* which is proper to *theirs.* Yea, and is not its courſe the ſame in its whole ſanctifying-work, to bring home the particular Truth, whoſe Impreſſion it would leave on the Soul, with application thereof to it *in particular*; which (as generally propounded in Scripture) men are ſo apt to wave and neglect; for what is every ones concern, is commonly thought no ones: And what need that its method here ſhould be wholly diverſe?

But in whichſoever of theſe ways the Spirit of God doth manifeſt his love, it is not to be doubted, but that

There is ſuch a thing in it ſelf very neceſſary, and to be attained and ſought after:

And that it is highly delectable when he doth vouchſafe it.

That there is ſuch a thing to be ſought

after, as a communicable privileg and favour to holy Souls, is evident enough from multitudes of Scriptures. Thoſe that have been occaſionally mentioned in ſpeaking (what was thought fit to be ſaid) of the way of his doing it, need not be repeated, unto which we may add, what we find is added to thoſe above-recited words, *Eye hath not ſeen, &c. the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, viz. *But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit.* And that Spirit not only gives thoſe *lovers of God* above-mentioned a clearer view of the *things* prepared for them, ſo as that the *nature* of them might be the more diſtinctly underſtood, (as is argued in the latter part of this, and in the following verſe); but alſo of their own *propriety* and *intereſt* in them; *Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God*, [*that we may know the things that are freely given us of God*]. Whence therefore they are revealed by the Spirit, not as *pleaſing objects* in themſelves only, but as *gifts*, the evidences and iſſues of Divine Love; *their own* proper portion, by the bequeſt of that Love to whom they are ſhew'n. Nor is this the work of the Spirit only, as inditing the Scriptures, but it is ſuch a work as helps to the *ſpiritual diſcerning* of theſe things; ſuch as whereto the *natural man* is not competent, who yet is capable of reading the Scriptures as well as other men. And what will we make of thoſe words of our Saviour, when having told his Diſciples, *he would*

1 Cor. 2. 9. v. 10. v. 12. Joh. 14:

pray

pray the Father, and he ſhould give them another comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, that he might abide with them for ever: Even the Spirit of Truth, &c. He adds, *I will not leave you comfortleſs, I will come to you*; that is, (as is plain) *by that Spirit*]. And then ſhortly after ſubjoins, *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt my ſelf to him.* Here is an expreſs promiſe of this *love-manifeſtation*, whereof we ſpeak, *by the Spirit*, (the Comforter mentioned above); not to thoſe particular perſons only, unto whom he was then directing his ſpeech, or to thoſe only of that time and age, but to them indefinitely that ſhould *love Chriſt, and keep his commandments.* Which is again repeated in other words of the ſame import; after *Judas* (not Iſcariot) his wondering expoſtulation touching that peculiarly of this *loving manifeſtation*; Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, *If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* So that ſuch a manifeſtation as is moſt aptly *expreſſive* of *love*, ſuch converſe and cohabitation as imports moſt of kindneſs and endearedneſs, they have encouragement to expect that do love Chriſt and keep his words; The ſame thing no doubt with that *ſhedding abroad of the love of God in their hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt given to them*, mentioned before. And whereas we have ſo plain and repeated

v.16. v.18. v.21. v.23.

mention of the ſeal, the earneſt, the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, what can theſe expreſſions be underſtood to import (and they do not ſignifie nothing) other than confirmation of the love of God, or aſſuring and ſatisfying evidences and pledges thereof.

And that there ſhould be ſuch an inward manifeſtation of divine love ſuperadded to the publique and external declaration of it (which is only made indefinitely to perſons ſo and ſo characteriz'd) the exigency of the caſe did require; That is, *wherein it was neceſſary his love ſhould be diſtinctly underſtood and apprehended*, it was *ſo far neceſſary this courſe ſhould be taken to make it be ſo.* A meer external revelation was not ſufficient *to that end*; Our own (unaſſiſted) reaſonings therefrom were not ſufficient. As other Truths have not their due and proper impreſſion, *meerly* by our rational reception be they never ſo plain, without that holy ſanctifying influence before inſiſted on; ſo this Truth alſo of *Gods love to this perſon in particular* hath not its force and weight, its efficacy and fruit anſwerable to the deſign of its diſcovery, unleſs it be applied and urged home on the Soul by a communicated influence of the Spirit to this purpoſe: Many times not ſo far as to overcome and ſilence tormenting doubts, fears and anguiſh of ſpirit in reference hereto, and, where that is done, not ſufficient to work off deadneſs, drowzineſs, indiſpoſition to the doing of God chearful ſervice, not ſufficient to excite and ſtir up, love, gratitude, admiration and praiſe.

praiſe. How many (who have learned not to make light of the love of God as the moſt do) who reckon *in his favour is life*, to whom it is not an indifferent thing whether they be accepted or no; who cannot be overly in their enquiry, nor trifle with matters of everlaſting conſequence, who are not enough Atheiſts and Scepticks to permit all to a mad hazard, nor eaſie to be ſatisfy'd, walk mournfully from day to day with ſunk, dejected ſpirits, full of anxiety, even unto agonies under the clear (external) diſcovery of Gods love, to perſons of that character, whereof they *really are?* ſuch as obſerve them judg their caſe plain, and every one thinks well of them, but themſelves; yea their mouths are ſometimes ſtopt, by ſuch as diſcourſe the matter with them, but their hearts are not quieted: or, if they ſometime are, in a degree, yet the ſame doubts and fears return with the former importunity, the ſame work is ſtill to be done, and 'tis but rolling the returning ſtone: And all humane endeavours to apply and bring home the comforts proper and ſutable to their caſe prove fruitleſs and ineffectual, nothing can be faſtened upon them; they refuſe to be comforted, while God himſelf doth not create (that which is the fruit of his own lips) peace, peace; while, as yet, they are not fill'd with joy and peace in believing, and made to abound in hope *through the power of the Holy Ghoſt.* Rom. 15: 13. It is plain there needs a more *learned tongue* than any *humane one*, to ſpeak a *word in ſeaſon to ſuch weary ones.* Iſa: 50.

How many, again, have ſpirits overcome with deadneſs and ſloth under a ſettled (perhaps not altogether miſtaken but more notional) apprehenſion of the ſame love! They have only that aſſurance which ariſes it may be not from a falſe but the ſingle teſtimony of their own ſpirits; at leaſt unaccompanied with other than the ordinary help of the Spirit, not very diſtinguiſhable from the workings of their own; Have reaſoned themſelves (perhaps regularly, by obſerving the rule and the habitual bent of their own ſpirits) into an opinion of their own good eſtate, ſo that they are not vext with doubts and fears as ſome others are. But they do not *diſcover to others*, nor can *diſcern in themſelves* any degree of life and vigour, of heavenlineſs and ſpirituality, of love to God or zeal for him, proportionable to their high expectations from him, or the great import of this thing *to be beloved of God:* There is no diſcernible growth or ſpiritual improvement to be found with them; How remote is their temper from
Acts 9.31. that of the Primitive Chriſtians! It is apparent what is yet wanting, they are not *edify'd* (as thoſe were) *walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Wherefore the matter is plain, *There is ſuch a thing, as an effectual over-powering communication of the Holy Ghoſt for the manifeſting of the love of God, of great neceſſity and importance to Chriſtians; that may be had and ought to be diligently ſought after.*

2. 2. And if it be afforded (which was the other

other thing propoſed); How infinitely delectable is that manifeſtation! the thing it ſelf carries its own reaſon and evidence with it.

1. If we conſider the matter repreſented to us thereby; *The love of a God!* How tranſporting would the thought of it be to an enlightened apprehenſive mind! no one whoſe nature is not over-run with barbariſm would entertain the diſcovery of the harmleſs *innocent* love (though it were not profitable to us) even of a creature like our ſelves otherwiſe than with complacency; Yea, though it were a much inferiour (even a brute) creature. Men are *pleaſed* to behold love expreſſing it ſelf towards them in a child, in a poor neighbour, in an impotent ſervant; yea, in their horſe or their dog. The greateſt Prince obſerves with delight the affection of the meaneſt peaſants among his Subjects: Much more would *they* pleaſe themſelves if they have occaſion to take notice of any remarkable expreſſion of his favourable reſpect to them! But how unſpeakably more, if he vouchſafe to expreſs it by gracious intimacies, and by condeſcending familiarities! How doth that perſon hug and bleſs himſelf! How doth his Spirit triumph, and his imagination luxuriate in delightful thoughts and expectations, who is in his own heart aſſured he hath the favour of his Prince! Yea, with what complacency are inward friends wont to receive the mutual expreſſions of each others love! And can it be thought the love of the

great and bleſſed God ſhould ſignifie leſs?

How great things are comprehended in this, *The Lord of Heaven and Earth hath a kindneſs towards me and bears me good will!* How grateful is the reliſh of this apprehenſion, both in reſpect of what it, in it ſelf, imports, and what it is the root and cauſe of?

True ingenuity values love for it ſelf. *If ſuch a one will think of me, if I ſhall have a place in his remembrance, If he will count me among his friends*; this we are apt to be pleaſed with. And tokens are ſent and interchanged among friends, not only to expreſs love, but to preſerve and cheriſh it, and keep up a mutual remembrance among them. And as there is a great pleaſure conceived, in receiving ſuch expreſſions or pledges of love from a friend, not ſo much for the value of the thing ſent, as of what it ſignifies, and is the token of *his love*, his kind remembrance; ſo is there no leſs pleaſure in giving and ſending, than in receiving: Becauſe that hereby, as we gratifie our own love, by giving it a kind of vent this way; ſo we foreſee how we ſhall thereby excite theirs; which therefore, we put a value upon, even abſtracting from any advantage we expect therefrom. And this hath a manifeſt reaſon in our very natures; becauſe we reckon there is an honour put upon us, and ſomewhat is attributed to us, when we are well thought of, and a kindneſs is placed upon us; eſpecially by ſuch as have themſelves any reputation for wiſdom and judgment. *How dignifying is the love of God!* How honourable

rable a thing to be his favourite! The Apoſtle ſeems to put a mighty ſtreſs on this, when he utters thoſe ſo emphatical words, *wherefore we labour* (ſo defectively we read it, *we covet, or are ambitious of it as our honour*, as that word ſignifies), *that whether preſent or abſent we may be accepted of him*; *q. d.* neither life or death, neither being in the body or out of it, ſignifie any thing to me, or they are indifferent things in compariſon of this honour, that *he may accept me*, that I may be pleaſing to him, and gracious in his eyes, that I may ſtand well in his thoughts, and he bear a kind and favourable regard to me. 2 Cor. 5. 9.

Yea and this is a thing in it ſelf delightful, not only as it's *honourable*, but as it is *ſtrange* and *wonderful*. Things that are in *themſelves grateful*, are ſo much the more ſo, for their being ſomewhat ſurpriſing, and above all our expectation. I ſay, ſuppoſing they have an antecedent gratefulneſs in them, (for otherwiſe we know there are alſo very unwelcome wonders, and which are ſo much the more dreadful, becauſe they are ſurprizing and unexpected), it is greatly heightened by their being out of the road quite of all our thoughts,---*great things that we looked not for*. And who would have look't for ſuch a thing as this, That the Lord of Glory ſhould place his Love on ſuch a Worm as I! Which is ſet off with the more advantage, becauſe the ſame light that repreſents to a Soul Gods love, doth alſo diſcover to it, at the ſame time, its own deformity and unlovelineſs,

loveliness. And then how taking and overcoming is the thought, *I impure wretch! loathsome miscreant! that lost apostate creature, that made one with a race and crew of rebels, was confederate with rebellious men against Him, yea in a combination with those revolted creatures the Devils, and now taken* (I know not why) *into a state of acceptance and favour with him! And his love is declared to be towards me! And why towards me? in my self so vile! And such love! the love of an holy glorious God, towards one in whose very nature was such an horror and hell of wickedness! Why towards me rather than others, not naturally more vile than I?* How can this be thought on without crying out, O wonderful! O the depths, breadths, lengths and heights of this love, that so infinitely passeth knowledg! And here the greater the wonder, the greater is also the delight.

And now also are the *effects* of this *love* great in the eyes of the Soul, according to the apprehended greatness of their *cause*. If we indeed were to form conceptions of these things our selves, by our own light and conduct, our way were to follow the ascending order, and go up from the *effects* till we reach the *cause*; But he can, if he please, in the *cause* present to us the *effects*, and maginfie them in our eyes, by giving us to see unto how great and magnificent a *cause* they owe themselves. Now shall we know whence all hath proceeded that he hath done for us. Wherefore again must the transported Soul admiringly cry out, *I now*

see

ſee whence it was that he gave his Son, becauſe he ſo loved the world! Why he came and bled and died, *who hath loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood*! What a luſtre doth that love caſt upon thoſe ſufferings and performances! *I ſee why he ſent his Goſpel to me, why ſo convincing awakening words were often ſpoken in my ear, (I ſee much in what once I ſaw but little), why he ſo earneſtly ſtrove with me by his ſpirit, why he gave not over till he had overcome my heart, why he humbled, melted, broke me, why he drew ſo ſtrongly, bound me ſo faſt to himſelf, in ſafe and happy bonds; why he ſhone into my mind with that mild and efficacious light, transformed my whole Soul, ſtampt it with his holy Image, and markt me out for his own. Theſe are now great things, when I behold their glorious mighty cauſe!*

And now alſo in this ſame *cauſe* are all the great *effects* to be ſeen which are yet to be *brought about by it.*

They are ſeen as very great. His continued preſence and conduct, which he affords to his own through this world; That conſtant fellowſhip which they expect him to keep with them; The guidance and ſupport they look for; *In his love* theſe appear great things. And now doth Heaven ſound no more as an empty name, it looks not like a languid faint ſhadow; ſomewhat can be apprehended of it that imports ſubſtance, when it's underſtood to be a ſtate of reſt and bleſſedneſs in the communion of the God of Love; and intended as the laſt product and expreſſion of his love! They

They are ſeen *as moſt ſure and certain.* Such Love, now manifeſted and apprehended, leaves no place for doubtful thoughts and ſuſpicious miſgivings. There is no fear that this Love intends to impoſe upon us, or mock us with the repreſentation of an *imaginary heaven*; or that it will fail to do what can be expected from it to bring us to the *real one.*

How pleaſant is it now to behold the great and ſure products of this mighty Love! its admirable deſigns and projects, as they appear in the Goſpel-revelation (now illuſtrated and ſhone upon by divine light) to lie ready formed in the pregnant womb of this great productive cauſe. It cannot but be an unſpeakable pleaſure which ſuch a diſcovery will carry with it; when we thus behold the matter it ſelf that is diſcovered and offered to our view, unto which it muſt be a very conſiderable additional pleaſure that will ariſe.

2. From the nature and kind of this manifeſtation. As being

In the general made by himſelf. 'Tis a too plain and ſad Truth that men have unhappily learn'd to diminiſh God to themſelves, and make every thing of him ſeem little. But when he repreſents his Love *himſelf* (as who but God can repreſent the Love of God? He only can tell the ſtory of his own Love) that evil is provided againſt: He will manifeſt it ſo as it *ſhall* be underſtood; and ſet it off to the beſt advantage. He will make it known how great a thing it is to be beloved of him. And when he gives that

that bleſſed ſalutation; *Hail thou that art highly favoured! O thou that art greatly beloved!* He will withal beſpeak and procure a ſutable entertainment of it. And hence

Particularly it will be,

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Moſt immediate, that is, (at leaſt) ſo as not to be *only made* by ſome external teſtimony, given out many an age ago, out of which we are left to pick what we can; and to conſtrue or miſconſtrue it as our own judgment ſerves us; but ſo, as that *if He uſe ſuch an inſtrument*, he animates it, puts a ſoul into it, leaves it not as a dead ſpiritleſs letter: and applies it himſelf, to the purpoſe he intends by it, and immediately himſelf reaches and touches the heart by it.

Moſt facile and eaſily ſliding in upon us; ſo that we are put to no more pains, than to behold the light which the Sun caſts about us and upon us. Whatever labour it was neceſſary for us to uſe before, in our ſearches and enquiries into the ſtate of our caſe, there is no more now, than in moving being carried; or in uſing our own weak hand when another that is ſufficiently ſtrong lifts and guides it for us

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ing, and ſtrikes through the mind into the heart; there ſheds abroad this love, diffuſes the ſweet refreſhing ſavour of it; actuates ſpiritual ſenſe, makes the ſoul *taſte* how gracious the Lord is; and reliſh the ſweetneſs of his love, puts all its powers into a ſutable motion, and excites anſwerable affection, ſo as to make the Soul capable of interchanging love with love.

In all theſe reſpects, this manifeſtation of love cannot but be very delectable; and they who have not found it to be ſo, willl yet apprehend that it muſt be ſo, if they have found and experienced the cravings of their own hearts directed this way, and can upon enquiry find this among the things they would fain have from God; *O that I might be ſatisfied of his love!* that *I might know his good will towards me!* For to ſuch cravings muſt this delight at leaſt be commenſurate (as was formerly ſaid). But to them that are indifferent in this matter & unconcerned, to whom the love of God is a fancy or a trifle, no real or an inconſiderable thing, all this will be as taſtleſs as the white of an egg.

Concerning which yet (before we paſs from this head) 'tis needful to add theſe few things by way of caution.

1. That when we ſay this is of great neceſſity, we mean not that it is *ſimply neceſſary*; we think it not ſo neceſſary that a *Chriſtian cannot be without it*; i. e *as a Chriſtian.* But it is neceſſary to his well-and more-comfortable-being, and his more lively, fruitful *walk-*

walking and acting in his Chriſtian courſe.

2. That therefore the way of Gods dealing herein is with great latitude and variety; he having reſerved to himſelf by the tenour of his Covenant a liberty, to afford or ſuſpend it, to give it in a greater or leſs degree as in abſolute ſovereignty, and infinite wiſdom he pleaſes and ſees fit to determine.

3. It may not therefore with ſo abſolute and peremptory an expectation be ſought after, as thoſe things may that are neceſſary to the *holding of ſouls in life*; but with much reſignation, ſubmiſſion, and deference of the matter to the divine good pleaſure; ſuch as ſhall neither import *diſeſteem* of it, nor *impatience* in the want of it.

4. That it ought to be leſs-eſteemed than the *heart-rectifying-communication, that is impreſſive of Gods Image*, and whereby we are made partakers of his holineſs. *This* proceeds more entirely from pure love to God for himſelf, *that* from ſelf-love; *this* tends more directly to the pleaſing of us, than to the pleaſing of God. *This* is neceſſary (as was ſaid) but to our well or better being, *That* ſimply to our very being *in Chriſt*; this hath its greateſt *real* value from its ſubſerviency to the other. And what hath its value from its reference to another muſt be of leſs value than that.

5. That its a great miſtake to think God is not otherwiſe *to be enjoyed* than in this way of more expreſs teſtification of his love; as if you could have no enjoyment of a friend, otherwiſe than by his often repeating to you;

I love you, I love you, indeed I love you.

6. That it's a much greater, to place the ſum of Religion here; and that any ſhould make it the whole of their buſineſs, to ſeek this, or to talk of it; or ſhould think God doth nothing for them worth their acknowledgment, and ſolemn thankſgiving while he doth not this.

7. Moſt of all, that any ſhould reckon it the firſt thing they have to do when they begin to mind Religion, to believe Gods particular love to them, and that he hath elected them, pardoned them, and will certainly ſave them. So too many, moſt dangerouſly impoſe upon themſelves; and accordingly before any true humiliation, renovation of heart, or tranſaction and ſtipulation with the Redeemer, do ſet themſelves thus to believe, and it may be ſeek help from God more ſtrongly to believe it, when-as the Devil is too ready to help them to this Faith: And when he hath done it, they cry to themſelves *peace, peace*, and think all is well; take their liberty, and humour themſelves, live as they liſt, and ſay that for ſo long a time they have had aſſurance of their ſalvation. The Father of Lies muſt needs be the Author (or the Fautor, or both) of this Faith; for it is a lie which they believe; that is, that they are pardoned and accepted of God is a downright lie, repugnant to his Word and the tenour of his Covenant. And for any thing elſe that may import their ſtate to be at preſent ſafe, is *to them* no *credible* truth.

8. That

8. That for the moſt part, if Chriſtians, upon whom the renewing-work of the Holy Ghoſt in that former communication hath in ſome degree taken place, do yet want that degree of *this* alſo, which is neceſſary to free them from very afflicting doubts and fears, and enable them to a cheerful and lively walking with God; it is to be reckoned their own fault; either that they put too much upon it (too little minding his publick declarations in his Word), or do unduly ſeek it, or unſeaſonably expect it; or that they put too little upon it, and expect or ſeek it not; or that by their indulged carnality, earthlineſs, vanity of ſpirit, they render themſelves uncapable of it; or by their careleſs and too licentious walking, or their either reſiſting or neglecting holy motions, they grieve that Spirit that would comfort them. For though the reſtraint of ſuch more pleaſant communications may proceed, ſometimes, from an unaccountable Soveraignty, that owes no reaſon to us of it's arbitrary way of giving or withholding favours; yet withal, we are to know and conſider, that there is ſuch a thing as *paternal* and *domeſtick Juſtice* proper to Gods own Family, and which as the Head and Father of it, he exerciſeth therein; whereby (though he do not exerciſe it alike at all times) it ſeems meet to his infinite Wiſdom to awaken and rouze the ſloth, or rebuke the folly, or check the vanity, or chaſtiſe the wantonneſs of his offending-children; and that even *in this way*, by retiring himſelf, be-

coming more reſerved, withdrawing the more diſcernible tokens of his preſence, and leaving them to the torture (ſometimes) of their own conjectures, what worſe thing may enſue. And herein he may deſign, not only *reformation* to the delinquents, but *inſtruction* to others, and even *vindication* to Himſelf. For however theſe his dealings with mens ſpirits are *in themſelves* (as they muſt needs be) ſecret, and ſuch as come not under the immediate notice of other men; yet *ſomewhat conſequential thereto*, doth more openly appear, and becomes obvious to the common obſervation of ſerious Chriſtians with whom ſuch perſons converſe; that is, not only ſuch as languiſh under the more remarkable terrors of their ſpirits, and are *viſibly*, as it were, conſuming in their own flame, (of which ſort there occur very monitory and inſtructive examples, at ſome times); but even ſuch alſo as are deprived of his quickning influence, and have only ſomewhat remaining in them that is ready to dye, that are *pining away in their iniquities*, and ſunk deep into deadneſs and carnality (for his comforting communication is alſo quickning, and he doth not uſe to withhold it as it is quickening, and continue it as it is comforting, but if ſuch have comfort, ſuch as it is, they are their own comforters), do carry very diſcernible tokens of divine pleaſure upon them; and the evils and diſtempers under which their ſpirits lye waſting, are both their ſin and puniſhment. Their own wickedneſs cor-

rects

rects them, and their backſliding reproves them. And that reproof being obſervable, doth the ſame time warn others, yea and do that right to God, as to let it be ſeen he makes a difference, and refuſes the intimacies with more negligent, looſe, idle, wanton profeſſors of his Name, which he vouchſafes to have with ſome others, that make it more their buſineſs and ſtudy to carry acceptably towards him, and are more manifeſtly ſerious, humble, diligent, obedient obſervers of his will. If therefore we find not what we have found in this kind, however the matter may poſſibly be reſolvable into the Divine Pleaſure, (as it is more likely to be in the caſe of ſuch deſertions as are accompanied with terror, when no notorious apoſtacy or ſcandalous wickedneſs hath gone before), it is both ſafe and modeſt, yea and obvious to ſuſpect ſuch delinquencies as were before-mentioned, are deſigned to be animadverted upon; and that the Love hath been injured, which is now not manifeſted as heretofore.

9. That yet ſuch a degree of it, as is neceſſary to a comfortable ſerving of God in our ſtations being afforded; ſuch ſuperadded degrees, as whereby the Soul is in frequent raptures and tranſports, are not to be thought withheld penally, in any peculiar or remarkable reſpect, (or otherwiſe than it may be underſtood ſome way a penalty, *not to be already perfectly bleſſed*). For it is certain, that ſuch rapturous ſenſations, and the want of them, are not the diſtinguiſhing characters

of the more grown, ſtrong, and excellent Chriſtians, and of them that are more infirm, and of a meaner and lower pitch and ſtature. Yea thoſe extatical emotions, although they have much of a *ſenſible delectation* in them (as more hereafter may be ſaid to that purpoſe); and though they may, in part, proceed from the *beſt and moſt excellent Cauſe*, do yet, if they be frequent (which would ſignifie an aptitude thereto), import ſomewhat of *diminution in their ſubject*, and imply what is ſome way a leſſening of it; that is, they imply the perſons that are more diſpoſed this way, to be of a temper not ſo well fixed and compos'd, but more volatile and airy; which yet doth not intimate, that the *chief Cauſe* and *Author* of thoſe *motions* is therefore *mean* and *ignoble*; nay, it argues nothing to the contrary, but that the Holy Spirit it ſelf may be the *ſupream Cauſe* of them. For admitting it to be ſo, it doth not alter mens natural tempers and complexions; but ſo *acts* them, as that they retain (and expreſs upon occaſion) what was peculiar to their temper notwithſtanding. The work and office of the Holy Ghoſt, in its ſpecial communications, is to alter and new-mold men in reſpect of their *moral diſpoſitions*, not thoſe which are ſtrictly and purely *natural*; the *ſubject* is in this regard the ſame it was; and whatſoever is received, is received according to the diſpoſition of that; and it gives a tincture to what ſupervenes and is implanted thereinto; whence the ſame degree of ſuch communicated influence

fluence will not ſo diſcernibly move ſome tempers, as it doth others; as the ſame quantity of fire will not ſo ſoon put ſolid wood into a flame, as it will light ſtraw. That ſome men therefore are leſs ſenſibly and paſſionately mov'd with the great things of God (and even with the diſcovery of his love) than ſome others, doth not argue them to have leſs of the Spirit, but more of that temper which better comports with deeper judgment, and a calm and ſober conſideration of things. The unaptneſs of ſome mens affections unto ſtrong and fervent motion, doth indeed ariſe from a *ſtupid inconſiderateneſs*; of ſome others, from a more *profound conſideration*, by which the deeper things ſink, and the more they pierce even into the inmoſt center of the Soul, the leſs they move the ſurface of it. And though I do not think the ſaying of that Heathen applicable to this caſe, *It is a wiſe mans part to admire nothing*; for here is matter enough in this Theam, *the Love of God*, to juſtifie the higheſt wonderment poſſible; and not to admire in ſuch a caſe, is moſt ſtupidly irrational; yet I conceive the admiration (as well as other affections) of more conſidering perſons, is more inward, calm, ſedate, and diſpaſſionate, and is not the leſs for being ſo, but is the more ſolid and rational; and the pleaſure that attends it, is the more deep and laſting: And the fervour that enſues upon the apprehended Love of God, prompting them to ſuch ſervice as is ſutable to a ſtate of devotedneſs

to his intereſt, is more intenſe and durable; of the others, more flaſhy and inconſtant. As, though Flax ſet on fire, will *flame* more than Iron; yet withal it will *ſmoak* more, and will not *glow* ſo much, nor keep heat ſo long.

10. But to ſhut up this Diſcourſe: They that have more tranſporting apprehenſions of the love of God, ſhould take heed of deſpiſing them who have them not in juſt the ſame kind, or do not expreſs them in the ſame ſeraphick ſtrains. They that have them not, ſhould take heed of cenſuring thoſe that with humble modeſty, upon juſt occaſion, diſcover and own what they do experience in this kind; much leſs ſhould they conclude, that becauſe they find them not, there is therefore no ſuch thing to be found; which *Cynical* humour is too habitual to ſuch tempers. If they do fancy ſuch to be a weaker ſort of perſons they may be ſincere for all that. And it ought to be conſidered of whom it was ſaid, *That he would not quench the ſmoaking flax*, The Grace and Spirit of Chriſt ought to be reverenc'd in the various appearances thereof: *Whether we be ſober or beſides our ſelves--The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us* -- So diverſly may the apprehenſions of that Love work in the ſame perſon, much more in divers. Chriſtians ſhould be ſhie of making themſelves ſtandards to one another; which they that do, diſcover more pride and ſelf-conceit, than acquaintance with God, and more admiration of *themſelves* than *of his love.*

2 Cor. 5. 13, 14.

Thus

Thus far we have given ſome account of *the object to be delighted in*; wherein, if any think ſtrange that we have ſpoken ſo much of the *delectable Divine communication as belonging to the object* (which how it doth hath been ſufficiently ſhew'n); let them call it, if they pleaſe, a preparing or diſpoſing of the *Subject* (which it alſo, making its own way into the Soul, as hath been ſaid, effectually doth); and if the neceſſity of it be acknowledg'd upon that account, it equally anſwers the main purpoſe aimed at in all this; and had it been only ſo conſidered, would but have infer'd ſome alteration in the frame and method of this Diſcourſe, but not at all of the ſubſtance or deſign of it.

II. We art next to ſay ſomewhat briefly of the *Delight it ſelf to be taken therein.* Nor ſhall we be herein ſo curious as to diſtinguiſh (which ſome do) *Delight* and *Joy.* The diſtinction wont to be aſſigned, cannot, 'tis plain, hold here, ſo as to make the former of theſe ſignifie a brutiſh affection only; and the latter proper to rational nature. Nor is there any ſuch propriety belonging to the words, but they may be rendered (as indeed they are uſed in Scripture) promiſcuouſly, either in reference to the matter of intellectual or ſenſitive complacency, and either of a *reaſonable being*, or an *unreaſonable.* We take theſe therefore to ſignifie *ſubſtantially* the ſame thing, and here delight to be intirely all one with joy: That is, there is not any the higheſt de-

gree of *joy* which may not fitly enough be comprehended under the name of *Delight*, when it is placed (as here it is requir'd to be) upon the bleſſed God; Whereof, that we may ſpeak the more fully, it will be neceſſary to preface ſomewhat concerning its *general nature*; and more principally as it is found in man, within which compaſs our principal buſineſs lies.

Delight, in the general, is moſt intimately eſſential to Love; which imports a *well-pleaſedneſs* ariſing from the apprehended goodneſs or congruity of the thing loved; and it ſeems to be meerly by accident, that there is any thing elſe in *Love* beſides that complacency of Delight: That is, what there is elſe belonging to the nature of Love ariſes from the mixture and variety which is to be found in the preſent ſtate of things; which, if it were at preſent univerſally and perfectly good, and as moſt rationally it might be wiſh'd; Love could have no exerciſe but in Delight. Not being ſo; *Deſire that it might be ſo*, in reference *to our ſelves and others* whom we love, comes duly to have place; together with other acts or exerciſes of Love, which it belongs not ſo much to our preſent purpoſe to mention.

For inſtance, Whatſoever we can love, is either *Things* or *Perſons*; whatſoever *things* we love, is for the ſake of *Perſons*, either our ſelves or others; whom alſo we love either ſupreamly, or ſubordinately. And whomſoever we love ſupreamly, as it is certainly either God or our ſelves,

ſelves, we love whatſoever elſe, Perſon or Thing, either for Gods ſake, or our own. Be it now the one or other, or whereſoever we can place our love, we find things in reference to any object of it, not yet as we would have them, and as they ſhall be in that ſetled ſtate which ſhall be permanent and laſt always; whereunto this is but preparatory only; and introductive. The Creation is indigent, every creature wants ſomewhat even whereof it is capable; and our own wants in many reſpects, we cannot but feel. Nothing is perfect in its own Kind, in reſpect of all poſſible acceſſories thereto; even the ſtate of glorify'd Spirits above, is not yet every way perfect; much is wanting to their full and compleat felicity; the Body and Community whereto they belong, the *General Aſſembly*, is not yet entire and full; *Their common Ruler* and *Lord* is not acknowledg'd and had in honour as he ſhall be. In the mean while, their conſummate bleſſedneſs (which much depends on theſe things), and the ſolemn Jubilee to be held at the cloſe and finiſhing of all Gods work, is defer'd. Yea, and if we go higher; The bleſſed God himſelf, the Author and Original of all things, although no-thing be wanting to the *real* perfection of his Being and Bleſſedneſs, hath yet much of his *Right* with-held from him by his lapſed and apoſtate Creatures; ſo that, which way ſoever we turn our ſelves, there remains *to us* much matter of rational (yea, and holy) deſire; and moſt juſt cauſe that *our love* (place we it as well

and

and duly as we can) have its exerciſe that way; we have before us many *deſiderata*, according as things yet are. *Deſire* is therefore *Love ſuted to an imperfect ſtate of things* wherein it is yet imperfect.

And becauſe it's *ſuted* to ſuch a ſtate of things, it cannot therefore but be *imperfect love*, or *love tending to perfection*. *Pure and ſimple delight* is *love* ſuted to a ſtate of things every way perfect, and whereto there is nothing lacking. Wherefore Delight appears to be the *perfection of Love*, or *Deſire ſatisfied*.

But now becauſe this preſent ſtate is mixed, and not ſimply evil, or ſuch wherein we find no preſent good; therefore the love which is ſuted thereto, ought conſequently to be mixed of theſe two eſpecially (unto which two the preſent diſcourſe is both extended and confin'd, becauſe theſe two affections only are mentioned in the Text) *Deſire* and *Delight*.

So far as things are otherwiſe than we (*practically*) apprehend, 'tis fit they ſhould be with our ſelves or others whom we love; our Love is exerciſed *in deſire*, wherein they are as we would have them, *in delight*; for then our deſire is ſo far ſatisfied; and *deſire ſatisfied* ceaſes, though *love* do not ceaſe. Or, it ceaſes not by vaniſhing into nothing, but by being ſatisfy'd; that is, by being perfected in the Delight which now takes place.

The one of theſe is therefore truly ſaid to be Love exerciſed upon a *good* which we behold at a diſtance, and are reaching at. The other,

Love

Love ſolacing it ſelf in a preſent good. They are as the wings and arms of love; Thoſe for purſuits, theſe for embraces. Or the former is love in motion; the latter is love in reſt. And as in bodily motion and reſt, *that* is in order to *this*, and is perfected in it; Things move not, that they may move, but that they may reſt (whence perpetual progreſſive motion is not to be found); ſo it is alſo in the motion and reſt of the mind or ſpirit; it moves towards any object with a deſign and expectation to reſt in it, and (according to the courſe and order which God hath ſtated and ſet) can never move forward endleſly towards a good in which it ſhall not at length reſt; though yet *Deſire* and *Delight* have a continual viciſſitude, and do (as it were circularly) beget one another.

And thus hath God himſelf been pleaſed to expreſs his *own Delight*, or the *Joy* which he takes in his people, even by the name of *Reſt*, viz. *that of Love. He will rejoice over thee with joy, he will reſt in his love.* Zeph. 3. 17, 18. Wherefore delight hath not been unfitly defined, *The repoſe or reſt of the deſiring faculty of the thing deſired.*

It is true, that Love, as ſuch, hath ever ſomewhat of delectation in it; for we entertain the firſt view of any thing we apprehend as Good, with ſome pleaſedneſs therein (ſo far as it is loved), it is grateful to us, and we are gratified ſome way by it; yea, there is ſomewhat of this before any emotion by deſire towards it; For we would not *deſire* it,

if

if it were not *pleaſing* to us; which *deſire* is then continued (as far as love is in exerciſe) till it be attained for our ſelves or others, according as the object of our love (*i.e.* the object *for whom* as we may call it) is.

Nor is that a difficulty, how yet there may be ſomewhat of *delectation*, and even of *reſt* in this love of *deſire*; For the Soul doth in that caſe, while it is thus deſiring, reſt from the *indetermination of deſire*: that is, if it have placed Love upon any one (it ſelf or another) upon whom therefore it doth with a ſort of pleaſedneſs ſtay and reſt; it doth firſt in the general deſire *it may be well with ſuch a one*; and then, if any thing occur to its notice that it apprehends would be an advantage to the perſon loved; though it ceaſe not deſiring it, yet it ceaſes from thoſe its former hoverings of *deſire*; being pitch'd upon this *one thing*, as ſatisfied that this *would be a good* to him it loves. The appetite ſtays and inſiſts upon this thing; As the Pſalmiſt, *One thing have I deſired.* It hath here, as it were, a ſort *of hypothetical reſt*; *q. d.* How well-pleaſed ſhould I be if this were compaſt and brought about! Or it hath an anticipated and pre-apprehended reſt, *a reſt in hope* (by which the object is ſome way made preſent), as it is ſaid, *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* For there is no rational deſire which is not accompani'd with hope. *Deſpair* ſtifles *Deſire.* That which appears ſimply impoſſible, paſſes for nothing; and goodneſs goes not beyond the compaſs of being. But whatſoever appears

Pſal. 27. 4.

pears to us *a good* (whether for our ſelves or another), *that is* ſutable and poſſible; *That* if love ſtir in reference to it, becomes the object of *complacential deſire*; that is, it pleaſes us firſt upon ſight, or upon ſuch an apprehenſion of it; the appetite pitches, centers and reſts upon it; and then we purſue it with deſire. But then our delectation therein grows, as our hope doth it will be attained; and ſtill more (if we find it to anſwer its firſt appearance) as by degrees it is attained actually; till *being fully attain'd*, our deſire (as to that thing) ends in all the *delight* and ſatisfaction which it can afford us; ſo that the delight and reſt which follows deſire in the actual fruition of a full and ſatisfying-good, is much more intenſe and pure, than that which either goes before, or doth accompany it; and is indeed the ſame thing with fruition or enjoyment it ſelf; only that this term hath been, by ſome, more appropriated to ſignifie the delectation which is taken in the laſt End, unto which yet it hath no more native deſignation than divers other words.

We have then thus far ſome general notion of *Delight* (and alſo of *Deſire* which is taken in here only on the by, and as tending ſomewhat to illuſtrate the other, whereof yet what we now ſay may be of ſome uſe hereafter).

We are next to ſpeak of *this Delight* in ſpecial, which is here to be placed *upon God*. About which we are are to conſider, both

What

What it is we are called to.
And *how* we are to reckon our ſelves called to it.

And 1, That we may ſhew, *What* we are called to. Having in this general account ſpoken only of *humane delight*, or of delight as it is to be found among men; It will now be neceſſary to diſtinguiſh this into

{ *Meerly Natural*,
{ And *Holy*.

And when we thus diſtinguiſh, it is to be underſtood, that by *natural* we mean what is within the ſphere of *Nature* in its preſent corrupted ſtate; otherwiſe, what was *natural* to man did (taken in a large ſenſe) include *holineſs* in it; and ſo the addition of *holineſs* doth but make up *purely natural delight*, as it was at firſt: But as the caſe now is, the diſtinction is neceſſary.

And the latter of theſe only will be the ſubject of our following diſcourſe; as being only ſutable to the bleſſed Object whereon it muſt terminate, and only capable of being apply'd thereto.

When therefore our delight is to be placed and ſet on God, this muſt be underſtood as preſuppoſed, that it be purify'd, drain'd from the pollution and impure tinctures which it hath derived from our vitiated Natures,

tures, and further contracted by our converſe with impure, mean, and vile things. For only that delight is to be placed on God which *can* be ſo placed; and *delighting in God* being duly deſigned, that is, by conſequence deſigned which is neceſſary thereto: And thereto is neceſſary, not meerly the direction of one ſuch particular *act* towards God, but an *holy principle*, as prerequiſite to the right doing even of that alſo.

Unholy love declines God; and indeed it is unholy, in as much as it doth ſo. Whence therefore it is as impoſſible it ſhould be ſet on God, remaining unholy, as that it ſhould be another thing from it ſelf, and yet be ſtill wholly what it was.

Although it cannot be *another thing* in its general nature (as it is not neceſſary it ſhould), it muſt be a much altered thing, by the acceſſion of *holineſs* thereto. And this coming upon the whole Soul, even upon all its faculties and powers, doth therein ſpread it ſelf unto its delight alſo. *Delight in God* is not the work of an unholy heart.

And (as may be collected from what hath been ſaid) *Holineſs* conſiſting in a right diſpoſition of heart towards God, a divine Nature, participated from him, conform to him, and which works and tends towards him, and in it ſelf ſo delightful a thing; It may thence be ſeen what holy *delight* is, or wherein the *holineſs* of it ſtands.

It muſt to this purpoſe be conſidered, that this *holy delight* is twofold, according to a two-

two-fold conſideration of the *delectable object*; into which, what was formerly ſaid about it may be reduced.

All delight in God ſuppoſes, as hath been ſaid, ſome communication from him.

That communication is either of *light*, whereby his Nature and Attributes are in ſome meaſure known; or of *operative influence*, whereby his Image is impreſt, and the Soul is fram'd according to his will. And ſo 'tis partly *mental* or *notional* (I mean not meerly notional, but that hath with it alſo an aptitude to beget a correſpondent-impreſſion on the Soul, and not engage it in ſome ſpeculations concerning him only), and partly *real*, that actually begets ſuch an impreſſion it ſelf. It is partly ſuch as may be *underſtood*, and partly ſuch as may be *felt*; the manifeſtation of his Love partly belongs to the one of theſe, and partly to the other.

Anſwerably hereto, the delight that is taken in him, is either more

- *Open* and *explicite*, and wherein a perſon reflects upon, and takes notice of his own act, and whereupon it is exerciſed.
- Or, *more latent*, *implicite* and unobſerv'd, when his delight lies folded up in other acts and diſpoſitions which have another more principal deſign, though that alſo is involved in them.

The former way, the Soul delights in God more

more *directly*, applying it ſelf thereto on purpoſe, and bending the mind and heart intentionally thereto; its preſent views of him having that very deſign and aim.

The latter way, it delights in him rather *collaterally*, when its preſent action (as well as the diſpoſition leading to it) hath another more direct ſcope and aim. And the delight only adheres to the act, as being in it ſelf delightful; as for inſtance, the acts of Repentance, Truſt, Self-denial, &c. which have *another end* than delight, though that inſinuates into them.

The former of theſe may be called *contemplative delight*. The Soul ſolacing it ſelf in a pleaſant meditation of God, whereby its delight in him is excited and ſtirred up.

The latter (underſtanding *ſenſe* ſpiritually, as it belongs to the *new creature*, and is taken *Phil.* 1. 9. *Heb.* 5. *ult.*) may be called *ſenſitive delight*; whereby the Soul, as it were, *taſtes how gracious the Lord is*. Which though it doth by the other alſo, yet the diſtinction holds in reſpect of the *way* wherein the *delight* is *begotten* and *begun*, if not in reſpect of the *thing it ſelf*, *begotten*, or wherein the matter *ends*.

In the former way, the Soul more expreſly reflects upon its own preſent exerciſe, which it directly intends.

In the latter, it may not reflect expreſly either upon its actual delight which it hath, nor actually conſider God as the *object* that yeilds it that pleaſure; as I may be delighted

by the pleaſant taſte of this or that food, without conſidering what the thing is I am feeding on; nor have diſtinct reflection on the pleaſure I take therein, having another and more principal deſign in eating, the recruiting of my ſtrength, and that delight being only acceſſory and accruing on the by.

The former is leſs durable, and ſooner apt to vaniſh upon the ceſſation of the preſent act, like the delight of the eye.

The latter is more permanent, as that of the taſte, and habitual; ſuch as is the pleaſure of any thing whereof one hath a continued poſſeſſion, as of a confirm'd ſtate and habit of health, or of the riches, dignities, pleaſant accommodations which belong to any ones ſetled condition; of which he hath that continual enjoyment that inſenſibly forms his ſpirit, raiſes and keeps it up to a pitch ſutable to his condition, though he have not every day or hour diſtinct formed thoughts of them, nor is often in that contemplative tranſport with *Nebuchadnezzar*,---*Is not this great Babylon which I have built? &c.*

Both theſe are *holy delight*, or *delight in God*. In both whereof may be ſeen, added to the general nature of *delight*, an *holy Nature* as the *Principle*, inferring a powerful ſteady *determination of the heart towards God*, as the *object* and *end* which it ultimately tends to, and terminates upon. Though in the former way of *delighting in God*, the Soul tends towards him more directly: In the latter (according as the acts may be to which the

the *delight* adheres), more obliquely, and through ſeveral things that may be intermediate unto that final and ultimate *object*.

And both theſe may fitly be underſtood to be within the meaning of this Text; which therefore we ſhall now conſider *apart* and *ſeverally*; though both of them very *briefly*.

And we begin with the latter of them. For though the former have, in ſome reſpect, an excellency in it above the latter; yet as the progreſs of Nature in other Creatures is by way of aſcent, from what is more imperfect to what is perfecter and more excellent: So is it with the communicated Divine Nature in the *new creature*, which puts it ſelf forth, firſt in more imperfect operations, the buddings, as it were, of that tree of life which hath its more florid bloſſoms, and at length its ripe and fragrant fruit afterwards; Or (to come nearer the caſe), inaſmuch as the latter ſort of *delight* (according to the order wherein we before mentioned them) hath more in it of the exerciſe of *ſpiritual ſenſe*; the other more of *ſpiritual reaſon*; Since humane Creatures, that have Natures capable of both ſorts of functions, do firſt exerciſe *ſenſe*, and by a ſlower and more gradual proceſs, come on to acts of *ratiocination* afterwards. So it is here, The Soul in which the Divine life hath taken place, doth firſt exerciſe it ſelf in *ſpiritual ſenſations*: So that though, in the matter of *delight*, it is not deſtitute of the grateful reliſhes of things truly and ſpiritually delectable; yet the more

formed and deſigned acts of *holy delectation*, in the higheſt *object* thereof, diſtinctly apprehended and pitcht upon for that purpoſe, do follow in their ſeaſon; and theſe are preparations, and the eſſays of the *new creature*, gradually and more indiſtinctly putting forth it ſelf in order thereto; The *Embryo's* of the other.

If therefore it be inquired, Wherein the *delight* of this more *imperfect ſort* doth conſiſt?

I anſwer, In the *Souls ſenſation* and *reliſh* of *ſweetneſs* in the holy quickening communications of God unto it, by which he firſt forms it for himſelf, and in the operations which it is hereby enabled to put forth towards him, while it is in the infancy or childhood of its Chriſtian ſtate.

Nor, while we ſay the *delight* of this kind doth more properly belong to the younger and more immature ſtate of Chriſtianity, do we thereby intend wholly to appropriate or confine it to that ſtate: For as when a Child is grown up to the capacity of exerciſing *reaſon*, it doth not then give over to uſe *ſenſe*, but continues the exerciſe of it alſo in its adult ſtate, even as long as the perſon lives; only, in its infancy and childhood its life is *more intirely a life of ſenſe*, though there are early buddings of *reaſon*, that ſoon come to be intermingled therein; notwithſtanding which, the *principle* that rules and is more in exerciſe, more fitly gives the denomination: So it is in this caſe alſo; that is, though there

are

are *ſenſations* of *Delight* and pleaſure in Religion (yea, and thoſe more quick, confirm'd and ſtrong in more grown Chriſtians), yet theſe *ſenſations* are more ſingle and unaccompany'd (though not altogether) with the exerciſe of *ſpiritual reaſon and judgment*, and do *leſs come in* that way with Chriſtians in their minority, than with others or themſelves afterwards.

Therefore that which we are to underſtand our ſelves *called* to under the name of delighting in God (thus taken) is,

The keeping of our Souls open to Divine Influences and Communications:

Thirſting after them, praying and waiting for them:

Endeavouring to improve them and co-operate with them, and to ſtir up our ſelves unto ſuch exerciſes of Religion as they lead to, and are moſt ſutable to our preſent ſtate.

Together with an allowing, yea, and applying our ſelves to *ſtay*, and *taſte* in our progreſs and courſe, the ſweetneſs and delightfulneſs of thoſe communications and operations whereof we have any preſent experience. For inſtance;

When we find God at work with us, and graciouſly dealing with our ſpirits, to humble them, break and melt them under a ſenſe of ſin, incline and turn them towards himſelf, draw them to a cloſure with his Son the Redeemer, to a reſignation and ſurrender of our ſelves to him, upon the terms of his Covenant and Law of Grace; Yea, and

when afterwards we find him framing our hearts to a courſe of holy walking and converſation; to the denyal of ungodlineſs and worldly luſts; to a ſober, righteous and godly life in this preſent world; to the exerciſes of Piety, Sobriety, Righteouſneſs, Charity, Mercy, *&c.* And now this or the like heavenly Dictate occurs to us, *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord*; what doth it import? what muſt we underſtand it to ſay or ſignifie to us? Though this that hath been mentioned, and which we are now ſaying *is not all* that it ſignifies (as will be ſhown hereafter); yet thus much we muſt underſtand it doth ſignifie and ſay to us:

"Thy only true *Delights* are to be found "in a courſe of Religion, they are not to be "expected from this world, or thy former "ſinful courſe; but in exerciſing thy ſelf unto "godlineſs, in receiving and complying with "the Divine diſcoveries, recommended to "thee in the Goſpel, and (through them) "the influences of Life and Grace, which rea-"dily flow in upon any Soul that hungers "and thirſts after righteouſneſs; and by which "thou mayſt be fram'd in all things after the "good and holy and acceptable will of God. "Herein thou ſhalt find ſuch pleaſures and "Delights entertaining thy Soul, as that thou "wilt have no cauſe to envy wicked men their "ſenſual Delights which they find in their "ſinful way; if thou wilt but obſerve what "thou findeſt, and exerciſe thy ſenſe, to diſ-"cern between good and evil; and ſet thy

ſelf

"ſelf to conſider whether there be not as well "more ſatisfying, as purer reliſhes of pleaſure, in "mortifying the fleſh with the affections and "luſts thereof, in denying thy ſelf, in dying "to this world, in living to God, in minding "the things of another world, in giving up "thy ſelf to the ſeveral exerciſes of an holy "Life, watching, praying, meditating, *&c.* in "truſting in the Lord with all thy heart, and in "doing all the good thou canſt in thy place and "ſtation, letting ſo thy *Light ſhine before men, that they ſeeing thy good works, may glorifie thy Father which is in Heaven*; In content-"ment with what thou enjoyeſt, and pati-"ence under what thou ſuffereſt in this world, "in *doing juſtice, loving righteouſneſs, and walking humbly with thy God*, Than ever "the vaniſhing pleaſures of ſin did or can "afford.

Thus into theſe two Things may all be ſumm'd up, which Delighting in God imports according to this notion of it.

1. The applying our ſelves to thoſe things by the help of Gods own communicated Influence (which in that caſe will not be withheld) *wherein the matter of Delight lies.*

2. The reflecting upon the things themſelves that are ſo Delightful, and ſetting our ſelves to diſcern, and taſting actually the Delectableneſs of them.

And ſurely, if ſuch words, *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord*, do ſay to us all this, they do not ſay nothing; nor ſay any thing impertinent,

either to their owh native import, or our ſtate and condition in this world.

Obj. *But here it may be Objected; If we ſo interpret* Delighting in God, *we ſhall by this means bring the whole of Religion, and all ſorts of actions that are governed and directed by it, within the compaſs of* this one thing; *and make Delighting in God, ſwallow up all that belongs to a Chriſtian, and be the ſame thing with Repentance, Faith, Self-denial, Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, &c. which would ſure ſeem too much to be comprehended under the name of one Particular holy action or affection; Eſpecially that they ſhould be called* Delighting in God, *when in the exerciſe of divers of theſe God may poſſibly not be in that inſtant actually ſo much as thought on.*

Anſw. To this it may be ſufficiently anſwered:

1. That theſe things cannot be hence ſaid with any pretence to be made the ſame thing with *Delighting in God*; but only that there is a *delight adhering* to all theſe; no more than it can be ſaid, when, at ſome ſplendid Treat or entertainment, there is a great variety of delicious Meats and Wine, which do therefore all agree *in this*, That they are *delectable*; that all theſe Diſhes and Liquors are therefore one and the ſame. Or, if the Maſter of the Feaſt call upon his Gueſts to *delight themſelves with him, their Friend* (as here the Particle in the Text, which we read *Delight* thy ſelf

[*in*]

[*in*] the Lord, may be read *Delight* thy ſelf [*with*] him); and he explains himſelf, That he means *by taſting this and that and another ſort of his Proviſions, and eating and drinking chearfully thereof*, ſurely his words could not with more Reaſon, than civility be capable of that ſnarling reply; *That*, therefore, it ſeems, *he thought the things themſelves or their taſts and reliſhes were all one.* For though they all afford *Delight*, yet each of a different kind.

2. But are not all theſe truly Delectable? Is there not a real *Delight* to be had in them? Let any man, that hath tried, conſult his experience; yea, let any one that hath not beſotted his Soul, and infatuated his underſtanding, but ſeriouſly conſider the very *Idæa's* of theſe things, and revolve the notions of them in his mind, and then ſoberly judg, whether they be not *delightful?* And, if ſo, when there is an actual ſenſe of pleaſure and ſweetneſs in the *communicated power*, and in the practice of them, Why is not this *delighting* in God? Admit that he is not actually thought on in ſome of theſe exerciſes; As when I freely forgive a wrong, or relieve a diſtreſſed perſon, or right a wronged one: If yet I do theſe things, from the radical Principle of the *Love of God* deeply ſetled in my Soul, and with a ſenſible *delight* accompanying my act, and the diſpoſition I find in mine heart thereunto: Here is not, 'tis true, the very act of *delighting* in God, formally terminated upon him as the Object; But it's he that gives me this

this *Delight*, and is the material Object (as well as Author) of it. The communication is from him, *whereby I am delighted*, and inabled to do the things that are *further delightful*. As if I converſe with an excellent perſon, my intimate friend, who is at this time *incognito*, and by a diſguiſe conceals himſelf from me, or I through my forgetfulneſs or inadvertency have no preſent thoughts of this perſon; but I hear his pleaſant Diſcourſe, and am much taken with it, and the perſon on the account of it: It is my Friend that I Delighted in all this while though I knew it not.

3. And what fault can I find in the matter that Divine *delight* thus runs and ſpreads it ſelf through the whole buſineſs of Religion, & all the affairs whereon it hath any influence? Is this the worſe or the better? Have I any cauſe to quarrel at this? Sure I have not. But if I have not ſuch actual thoughts of God, as may give me the advantage of terminating my *Delight* more directly on him, that may be, very much, *my own fault.*

4. And what is that an abſurdity that under the name of *Delighting in God*, the ſeveral acts and exerciſes of Religion beſides ſhould be comprehended? How often in Scripture are other (no-more-eminent) parts of Religion put for the whole. *The knowledg of God*, *calling upon God*, *The fear of God*, &c. How commonly are theſe acknowledged to be Paraphraſes of Religion? And ſhall I not add [*The Love of God?*]

That

That moſt authentick and owned ſummary of all *practical Religion*, and which ought to influence all our actions. And then how far are we from our mark? What is the difference between *loving God*, and *delighting in him?* But I moreover add, that *delight it ſelf in him*, cannot but be ſo taken in that ſharp paſſage, (though miſapply'd to the perſon of whom it was meant), *For Job hath ſaid, what profit is it that a man ſhould delight himſelf with God, (i.e.* or be *religious)*? It fitly enough ſignifies *Religion*, as *thus modify'd* or *qualified*, *viz.* as having this *quality* belonging to it, that it is *delightful*, or is tinctur'd with *delight in God.* Job 34. 9.

But this (ſo large) is not the only ſenſe, as we have ſaid, wherein we are to take *delighting in God.* And when any part of Religion caſts it's name upon the whole, it would be very unreaſonable to *exclude* the part from which the denomination is taken, or not to make that the principal thing there meant.

We therefore proceed to ſpeak,

2. Of the more *explicite delight in God*: And ſhall therein conſider,

The { *Nature* / *Modification* } of it.

1. Its *Nature*; Which from what hath been ſaid of *delight* in the general, with the addition of *holineſs* thereto, (which is the work of Gods Spirit, determining the act or 1.

or faculty to which it adheres towards God), may be conceived thus, *That it is the acquieſcence or reſt of the Soul in God, by a ſatisfiedneſs of will in him, as the beſt and moſt excellent Good.*

That it be the *reſt of the Soul*, belongs to its general nature.

And ſo doth the mentioned kind of *reſt*, more diſtinguiſhingly, *by the wills ſatisfiedneſs in him*: Becauſe the Soul may be alſo ſaid to *reſt ſatisfied* (in reſpect of another faculty) by the meer knowledg of Truth; But *this* ſuppoſes ſo much of *that* alſo as is neceſſary. And becauſe the acts of the *underſtanding* are ſubſervient and in order to thoſe of the *will*, in the Souls purſuit of a *delightful good*; which is ſo far attained as it *actually delights* therein; Therefore this may more ſimply be called the *reſt* of the *whole Soul*, whereas that other is its *reſt* but *in ſome reſpect only*: Eſpecially when we add,

As in the *beſt and moſt excellent good*; for this ſignifies the *good* wherein it *reſts* to be *ultimate*, and its *laſt end*, the very period of its purſuits, beyond which it neither needs nor deſires to go further, *viz.* as to the *kind* and *nature* of the *good* which it is now intent upon; though it ſtill deſire *more of the ſame*, till there be no place left for further *deſire*, but it wholly ceaſe and end in *full ſatisfaction.*

And that we may ſpeak ſomewhat more particularly of this *reſt in God*; it ſuppoſes,

1. *Knowledg of him.* That the Soul be well furniſhed with ſuch conceptions of his Na-

Nature and Attributes, as that it may be truly ſaid to be *himſelf it delights in*, and not *another thing*; not an Idol of its own fancy, and which its imagination hath created and ſet up to it inſtead of God. Therefore his own *repreſentation of himſelf* muſt be our *meaſure*; which being forſaken, or not ſo diligently attended to, He is either by *ſome*, *miſrepreſented*, (according as their own corrupt hearts do ſuggeſt impure thoughts), and made altogether ſuch a one as themſelves, and ſuch as cannot be the *object* of a *pure* and *ſpiritual delight*; or by *others* (as their guilt and fear do ſuggeſt to them black and direful thoughts of him) render'd ſuch as that he cannot be the *object* of *any delight at all.*

2. It ſuppoſes *actual thoughts of him*; *My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfi'd as with marrow and fat-neſs, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.* Pſal. 63. 5, 6.

3. *A pleaſedneſs with even the firſt view or apprehenſion of him*; which is moſt eſſential to any love to him, and which gives riſe to any motion of

(4.) *Deſire* directed towards him, upon the apprehenſion that ſomewhat is abſent, either of what is *due to him*, or *lacking to our ſelves from him.*

5. It includes the *ſatisfaction* or *repoſe it ſelf* which the Soul hath, ſo far as it finds its *deſire* anſwered in the one kind or the other.

Where we muſt more diſtinctly know, that the *delight* taken in him, is according as the

deſire

deſire is which works towards him, and *that* as our *love* to him is:

Now we love him either { for himſelf, or for our own ſelves.

For himſelf, ultimately, ſo as that our Love periods in him, and ſtays there, *viz. on him, as good in himſelf.*

For *our ſelves*; as when our *love to him* returns upon *our ſelves*; apprehending a *goodneſs in him* which is ſutable for *our enjoyment.*

Loving him in the former way, we deſire all may be aſcribed and given to him, that poſſibly may or can. And becauſe we know him to be every way perfect and full, and that nothing can be added to him of real perfection, and therefore nothing can be given him beſides external honour and acknowledgments: We therefore *deſire* theſe may be univerſally rendered him to the very uttermoſt. And as far as we find him worthily glorify'd, admired, and had in honour, ſo far we have *delight in* (or in reference to) *him*; conſiſting in the gratification of that *deſire.*

Loving him in the other way, (which alſo we are not only allow'd, but obliged to do, in contradiſtinction to all creature-good), *we deſire his nearer preſence and converſe, more full communications of his light, grace, and conſolations.* And are *delighted* according as we find ſuch deſire is anſwered unto us.

6. The

6. The form of expreſſion uſed in the Text, implies alſo *a ſtirring up our ſelves*, and the uſe of endeavours with our own hearts, to foment, heighten, and raiſe our own *delight*. The Conjugation (as it is thought fit to be called) into which the word is put, importing (by a peculiarity of expreſſiveneſs belonging to the ſacred Language) *action upon ones ſelf*; which muſt alſo be underſtood to have the ſame force, in reference to that former ſenſe of *delighting in God*; That is, that we put our ſelves upon thoſe acts and exerciſes whereunto ſuch *delight* is adjoined.

(Theſe things are now more curſorily mentioned, becauſe there will be occaſion more at large to inſiſt on them in the Diſcourſe of *The Practice of this Duty*, reſerved to the Second Part).

2. We now proceed to the *Modification* of this *Delight* in God; or the right manner or meaſure of it. 2.

Concerning which it is apparent in the general, it can be no further right than as it is *agreeable to its Object.*

That our *Delight* ſhould ever be adequate, or of a meaſure equal to it, is plainly impoſſible: But it muſt be ſome-way *ſutable*, or muſt bear proportion to it. I ſhall here mention but two (and thoſe very eminent) *reſpects* wherein it muſt do ſo; *viz.* in reſpect of

The

The { *Excellency* } Of the Good
{ *Permanency* } to be *delighted* in.

1. *The excellency of it.* Inaſmuch as it is the beſt and higheſt Good; it plainly challenges *our higheſt Delight*:

That is, *The higheſt Delight ſimply*, which our natures are capable of, is moſt apparently due to the bleſſed God, even by the *Law of nature it ſelf*, reſulting from *our natures*, *referd unto his*. And as the Caſe ſtands under the Goſpel;

The higheſt Delight comparatively, i. e. *higher than we take in any thing elſe*; nothing muſt be ſo much *delighted* in as he. We do not otherwiſe *delight* in him *as God*, which is one way of glorifying him. And its part of the Apoſtles charge upon the Pagan world, that knowing him to be God, they did not glorifie him *as God*.

If we make the compariſon between him and all the good things of this world, the matter is out of queſtion. It is the ſenſe of holy Souls, Pſal. 73. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and whom can I deſire on earth beſides thee?* When others ſay, *Who will ſhew us any Good?* They ſay, Pſal. 4. *Lord, Lift thou up the light of thy countenance--.* And thereby *he puts gladneſs into their hearts, more than when Corn and Wine increaſe.* Mat. 10. 47 Luk. 14. 26 *And whoſoever love not Chriſt more than Father, Mother, Wife, Child; yea, and their own lives, cannot be his Diſciples.* Their preſent worldly life

life it ſelf, if put in the balance, he muſt outweigh.

And if we put the compariſon between our ſpiritual eternal Life and him; though *he* and *that* can never be in oppoſition (as there may be often an oppoſition between him and this preſent life, ſo that the one is often quitted for the other); yet neither is there a *co-ordination*, but the *leſs worthy* muſt be *ſubordinate* to the *more worthy*: We are to deſire the *enjoyment of him* for his *own glory*.

And yet here is a ſtrange and admirable complication of theſe with one another. For if we enjoy him, *delight* and *reſt* in him as our beſt and moſt ſatisfying Good, we thereby *glorifie him as God*. We give him practically higheſt acknowledgments, we confeſs him the moſt excellent one. 'Tis his glory to be the laſt term of all deſires, and beyond which no reaſonable deſire can go further.

And if we ſeek and *deſire* his glory ſupreamly, ſincerely and really beyond and above all things; when he is ſo glorified to the uttermoſt, or we are aſſured he will be; our higheſt *deſire* is ſo far ſatisfied, and that turns to, or is, *our own contentment*: So that by how much more ſimply and ſincerely we paſs from, and go out of our ſelves, ſo much the more certainly we find our own ſatisfaction, reſt, and full bleſſedneſs in him. As it is impoſſible the Soul that loves him above it ſelf, can be *fully happy*, while *he hath not* his *full glory*; ſo it is for the ſame reaſon equally

impoſſible, but it muſt be ſo when *he hath.*

2. Our *delight* muſt be ſutable to the Object *(the Good to be delighted in).*

In reſpect of the permanency of it, *This* is the moſt durable and laſting Good. In this
1 Theſ. 5. 16. bleſſed Object therefore we are to *rejoice evermore.* As in the matter of *Truſt* we are required to *Truſt in the Lord for ever, becauſe in*
Iſa. 26. 4. *the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.* Everlaſting ſtrength gives ſufficient ground for everlaſting Truſt. So it is in the matter of *delight:* A permanent everlaſting excellency is not anſwered, but by a continual and everlaſting *delight*; Therefore, is it moſt juſtly
Phil. 4. 4. ſaid, *Rejoice in the Lord alway*; *and again I ſay to you rejoice*; alway, and ſtill on. If through a long tract of time you have been *conſtantly alway* rejoicing in the Lord, begin again, I, *again*, ſay to you rejoice; or rather never give over. The Object will warrant and juſtifie the act, let it be drawn forth to never ſo vaſt a length of time. You will ſtill find a continual ſpring, unexhauſted fulneſs, a fountain never to be drawn dry.

There will never be cauſe of diverſion with this pretence, that now this Object will yield no more: It is drained to the uttermoſt, and is now become an empty and guſtleſs thing.

With other things it may be ſo; and therefore our *delight* doth not anſwer the na-
1 Cor. 7. 30. tures of ſuch things, but *when we rejoice in them as if we rejoiced not.* They are as if they were not. All the things of this world are ſo.

For

For even the *faſhion of this world paſſeth away*; as it is afterwards added. Therefore no *delight* can fitly be taken in them, but what is volatil and unfixed as they are; leſt otherwiſe it over-reach, and run beyond its Object. And how abſurd and vain is it to have *our hearts ſet upon that which is not?* That takes wing, and leaves us in the dirt. v. 31.

This Object of *delight* is the *I am, yeſterday and to day the ſame, and for ever; without variableneſs and ſhadow of change.* Therefore the nature of it cannot allow us a reaſon; wherefore, if we be *delighted* therein yeſterday, we ſhould not to day; or if to day, why not to morrow, and ſo on to *for ever.*

Whence then we may ſee no one can ſay he hath anſwered the *import* of this Exhortation, *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord*, by having *delighted* in him at *ſometime. It is continual, as well as higheſt delight we are here called to.*

We ſee then thus far what we are called to when we are here directed to *delight* our ſelves in the Lord.

2. We are next to ſhew *How we are called to it.* And the matter it ſelf will anſwer the enquiry, we are called to it, according to what, *in it ſelf*, it is. Now it is 2.

Both a { *Priviledg*, And *Duty.*

We are therefore called to it (and accordingly are to underſtand the words).

1. *By way of gracious invitation* to partake of a *priviledg*, which our Bleſſed Lord would have us ſhare and be happy in; no longer to ſpend our ſelves in anxious purſuits and vain expectations of Reſt where it is not to be found; but that we retire our ſelves to him in whom we ſhall be ſure to find it. Pity and Mercy invite us *here* to place our *delight*, and take up our Reſt. And concerning this, there is no queſtion or imaginable doubt.

2. By way of *authoritative Command*. For we muſt know,

That *delight* in God is to be conſidered not only under the notion of a *priviledg* unto which we may eſteem our ſelves entitled; but alſo of a *duty* whereto we are moſt indiſpenſibly obliged. This is a thing (not ſo much not underſtood, as) not conſidered and ſeriouſly thought on, by very many; and the not-conſidering it proves no ſmall diſadvantage to the life of Religion. It occurs to very many, more familiarly, under the notion of a high favour, and a great vouchſafement (as indeed it is), that God will allow any of the Sons of men to place their *delights* in himſelf; but they (at leaſt ſeem to) think it's only the priviledg of ſome ſpecial favourites; of whom, becauſe they perhaps, are conſcious they have no cauſe to reckon themſelves, they are therefore very ſecure in the neglect of it. And thus is the pretence of modeſty and humility very often made an umbrage and ſhelter to the vile carnality of many an heart; and a want of fit-

neſs

neſs is *pretended* and *cheriſhed* at the ſame time, as an excuſe; That whereas they *do not delight* in God, they *never may*: For he that is unfit to day, and never therewithal applies himſelf with ſeriouſneſs, to the endeavour of becoming fit, is likely to be more unfit to morrow, and ſo be as much excuſed always as now; and by the ſame means at length excuſe himſelf from being happy; but never from having been the Author of his own miſery: But what? is it indeed no *duty to Love God?* Is that become no Duty which is the very ſum and comprehenſion of all duties? or can they be ſaid to Love him, that take no pleaſure in him, that is, to Love him without loving him. It is, indeed, wonderful grace that there ſhould be ſuch a contexture of our happineſs and duty; that, by the ſame thing, wherein we are obedient, we alſo become immediately, in the ſame degree, bleſſed. And that the Law of God in this caſe hath this very import *an obligation upon us to Bleſſedneſs.* But in the mean time we ſhould not forget that Gods Authority and Honour are concerned herein, as it is our duty; as well as our own happineſs, as it is our priviledg; And that we cannot injure our ſelves in this matter without alſo robbing God.

Delight in God is a great piece of homage to him, a practical acknowledgment of his ſovereign excellency, and perfect all-comprehending goodneſs; when we retire from all the world to him, we confeſs him better than all things beſides: That *we have none in Hea-*

ven or Earth that we eſteem worthy to be compared with him. But when our hearts are averſe to him, and will not be brought to *delight* in him, ſince there is ſomewhat in the mean while wherein we do *delight*; we do as much as ſay (yea, we more ſignificantly expreſs it than by *ſaying*) *that whatever that is, 'tis better than he*; Yea, that ſuch a thing is good, and he is not. For as *not-believing him* is a denial of his Truth, the making him a liar; *not delighting in him* is, equally, a denial of his Goodneſs, and conſequently even of his Godhead it ſelf.

And ſince we find the words are here laid down plainly in a preceptive form; *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord*: Can any think themſelves after this at liberty, to do ſo or not? 'Tis true, that they who are in no diſpoſition hereto have ſomewhat elſe to do in order to that (of which hereafter); but, in the mean time, how forlorn is their caſe, who have nothing to excuſe their ſin by, but ſin; and who, inſtead of extenuating their guilt, do double it!

Yea, and we are further to conſider, that it is not only commanded, by a *meer ſimple precept*, but that this Precept hath its *ſolemn ſanction*; and that not only by *promiſe*, here expreſly annexed (of which hereafter); but alſo of imply'd threatning; That *we ſhall not elſe have the deſires of our hearts*, but be neceſſarily unſatisfied, and miſerable; which is alſo in many other places expreſſed plainly enough. Great penalty is due upon not *delighting* in God,

God, even by the Goſpel-conſtitution it ſelf; which is not ſo *unreaſonably form*'d as to require more in this matter, than is ſutable to the object it ſelf; and is *framed ſo indulgently*, as to accept much leſs than is proportionable thereto; and yet within the capacity alſo of a reaſonable Soul: ſo that, though the very *nature of the thing* doth plainly dictate a *rule*, by which this matter is to be eſtimated and judged; yet *this other rule* gives conſiderable abatement and allowance; That is, it being conſidered what the Object claims and challenges, as by its own proper excellency due to it; and what the *Subject* is, by its own nature, capable of: Not only doth it hence appear, that *delight* in God is a *duty*, but that the Soul ought to riſe to *that higheſt pitch* of *delight* in him, *i. e.* unto the higheſt the Soul is naturally capable of. The very *Law of Nature*, reſulting from the reference and compariſon of *our nature* unto *Gods own*, requires ſo much; That we Love (or *delight*) in him with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our might, and with all our ſtrength; He deſerves from us *our very uttermoſt*. Yet this is by the Goſpel-conſtitution required *with indulgence* and abatement, not as to the *matter required, but as to the manner of requiring it.* The *matter required*, is ſtill the ſame, ſo as that the *pureſt & higheſt delight in God doth not ceaſe to be a duty*, or any *gradual defect* thereof *ceaſe to be a ſin.* The Goſpel doth make no change of the *natures of things*; makes nothing ceaſe to be *due to God* from us, which the Law of Nature made *due*; nor renders any defect

innocent, which is in its *own nature* culpable and faulty; Therefore the ſame pitch of *delight in God* is ſtill due and required that ever was: But that perfection is not (*finally* and *without relief*) required in the ſame manner, and on the ſame terms it was; that is, it is not, by the Goſpel required *under remedileſs penalty*, as it was; For the Law of Nature (though it made not a remedy ſimply impoſſible, yet it) provided none, but the Goſpel provides one.

Yet not ſo but the ſame penalty alſo remains *in it ſelf due* and *deſerved*, which was before. For as the Goſpel takes not away the *dueneſs* of any part or degree of that obedience which we did owe to God *naturally*, ſo nor doth it take away the *natural dueneſs* of *puniſhment*, for diſobedience in any kind or degree of it. Only it provides that (upon the very valuable conſideration which it makes known) it becomes *to us* a *remiſſible debt*, and actually remitted to them who come up to the terms of it. Not that it ſhould be *in it ſelf no debt*, for then nothing were remitted; Nor yet, when it ſo provides for the *remiſſion* of *defects* in this part of our duty, doth it remit the *ſubſtance* of the *duty it ſelf*, or pardon any *defects* of it to any but ſuch who are found *ſincere* in this, as well as the other parts of that obedience which we owe. Others, who after ſo gracious overtures, remain at their former diſtance, and retain their averſion, enmity, and diſaffection to God, it more grievouſly (and moſt juſtly) threatens

threatens and puniſhes as implacable; and who will upon no terms return into a ſtate of friendſhip and amity with their Maker, whom they hated without cauſe, and do now continue ſtrangers and enemies to him without excuſe; ſo that the very blood of the reconciling Sacrifice cries againſt them. Heb. 10. 29

And ſurely ſince (as was formerly ſaid) it is *God in Chriſt* that is the *intire Object* of this *Delight* or *Love*, 'Tis a fearful penalty that is determined upon them that do not ſo place it; when it is ſaid, *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha.* And when alſo it is ſaid, *Grace be upon all them that do*, it is plainly imply'd, that the penalty belongs to all them that do not *love him in ſincerity.* 1 Cor. 16. 22. Eph. 6. 24.

Of which *ſincerity* therefore of *delight in God*, (to keep within the compaſs of our preſent Theam), it is neceſſary we be well informed; as we may be from what hath been ſaid before; that is,

1. *That we delight in him ſupreamly*, and above all things elſe, *viz.* with *our higheſt* and *deepeſt complacency of will.* For it is not neceſſary (nor ordinarily poſſible), that our *delight in him* ſhould be *ever* accompany'd with ſuch ſenſible agitation of the corporeal Spirits, as we find in reference to *meerly ſenſible objects.* Which is not eſſential to ſuch *delight*, but an accident that follows *union with the body*; and more frequently, and to a greater degree in ſome tempers of body than others. But it is neceſſary there be that

practical

practical eſtimation of him, and propenſion towards him, as the beſt and moſt excellent good; as that we be in a preparation of mind and heart to forego whatever can come into any competition with him for his ſake.

That though we do not thus *delight in him ſo much as we ſhould*, yet we do *more than in any thing elſe*.

2. *That we continue herein*: That this be the conſtant habitual temper of our Spirits towards him: That we cleave to him with purpoſe of heart, as not only the moſt *excellent*, but the moſt *permanent object* of our *delight*: Having ſetled the reſolution with our
Pſal. 48. ſelves, *This God ſhall be our God for ever and ever*; *He ſhall be our God and guide even to the death.* And that there be frequent actual workings of heart towards him, agreeable to ſuch a temper, though they are not ſo frequent as they ought.

Which account we give of this *ſincerity* of *delight in God*, not to encourage any to take up with the *loweſt degree* of that *ſincerity*; but that none may be encouraged, upon their own miſtake in this matter, to take up with any thing ſhort of it; and that we may ſee whence to take our riſe in aiming at the higheſt pitch thereof.

And that we may (underſtanding the higheſt intenſeneſs and moſt conſtant exerciſe of *delight in God* that our Natures are capable of, to be our duty) underſtand alſo, that in reference to our *gradual defects* and *intermiſſions* herein, we ought to be *deeply humbled*

bled, as being faulty; *not unconcern'd*, as though we were innocent in this regard, That we need continual pardon upon theſe accounts; That we owe it to the Blood of the Redeemer, that ſuch things can be pardoned: That we are not to reckon, or ever to expect that Blood ſhould ſtand us in ſtead, to obtain our pardon for *never delighting in God ſincerely at all*; but only (ſuppoſing we do it *ſincerely*) that we do it not *perfectly*. For moſt certainly, they whoſe hearts are never turned to him as their *beſt* and moſt *ſovereign Good* or *Portion*, and *Ruler* or *Lord*; but do ſtill remain alienated in their minds, and enemies through wicked works, will periſh notwithſtanding. And that we might the more diſtinctly, together with the apprehenſion of *what we are called to in this matter*, underſtand alſo *how we are called to*, *i. e.* not by an *invitation* only, that leaves us at liberty, whether we will or will not, as we think fit: But by expreſs *command*, and that alſo back't with the *ſevere determination* of moſt *dreadful penalty* in caſe of *omiſſion*.

And thus we have in ſome meaſure ſhew'n the *Import* of the *Direction* in the Text, *That we Delight our ſelves in the Lord.*

A TREATISE OF Delighting in GOD:

From PSAL. 37. 4.

Delight thy ſelf alſo in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſires of thine heart.

PART II.

Concerning the Practice of Delight in GOD.

WE have in the former Part extended the meaning of the words, *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord*, beyond what they ſeem at firſt ſight literally to ſignifie: So as not to underſtand them meerly as requiring that very ſingle act of *Delight* to be immediately and directly terminated on God himſelf;

But

But to take them as comprehending alſo the ſum of all *holy* and *religious converſe with God, i. e. as it is delightful*, or as it is *ſeaſoned* (intermingled, and as it were beſprinkled) *with delight*; and upon the ſame account, of all our other converſe, ſo far as it is influenc't by Religion.

And I doubt not, to ſuch as ſhall attentively have conſidered what hath been ſaid, it will be thought very reaſonable to take them in that latitude; whereof the very letter of the Text (as may be alledg'd for further juſtification hereof) is moſt fitly capable. For (as was noted upon another Text where we have the ſame phraſe) the particle which we read [*in*] *the Lord*, hath not that ſignification alone, but ſignifies alſo [with] or [by] or [beſides] or [before] or [in preſence of], as if it had been ſaid, *Come and ſit down with God, retire thy ſelf to him, and ſolace thy ſelf in the delights which are to be found in his preſence and converſe, in walking with him, and tranſacting thy courſe as before him, and in his ſight.* As a man may be ſaid to *delight* himſelf with a friend that puts himſelf under his roof; and beſides perſonal converſe with himſelf, freely enjoys the pleaſure of all the entertainments, accommodations, and proviſions which he is freely willing to communicate with him, and hath the ſatisfaction which a ſober perſon would take in obſerving the rules and order of a well-governed houſe.

According to this (divers) *Import* of the Pre-

Precept enjoining this Duty, it will be requiſite to ſpeak diverſly of the *Practice* of the Duty it ſelf:

That is, That we treat of the *practice* and *exerciſe* of *Delight*;

1. *As a thing adherent to the other Duties of Religion.*
2. *As it is a diſtinct Duty of it ſelf.*

As to the former, our buſineſs will be, I.
To treat of the *exerciſe* of Religion *as delightful.* Now Religion is *delightful naturally* and *in it ſelf*; and makes a mans other actions, even that are not in themſelves acts of Religion, *delightful* alſo, ſo far as they are governed and influenc't by it; *If that Religion be true, i.e.* if it be *living*, ſuch as proceeds from a principle of Divine life.

Being therefore now to treat of the *Practice* of this Duty (whereof the *account* hath been already given), our Diſcourſe muſt aim at and endeavour theſe two things, (the former as leading and ſubſervient to the latter), *viz.*

1. That we may not take up, and reſt, or let our *practice* terminate in a Religion which is not *naturally* and *in it ſelf delightful.*
2. That we ſeek after and improve in that which is.

1. That

1. That which is not ſo, we have great reaſon not to acquieſce in, or be contented with, for it is plainly ſuch as will not defray it ſelf, or bear its own charges, as having only cumber and burden in it, no uſe or end; I mean the *dead formality* of Religion only. We find it natural and pleaſant to carry about with us our own living body; but who would endure (how wearifom and loathſom a task were it?) to lug to and fro a dead carcaſe?

It will be upon this account needful to

- Inſiſt in ſhewing more diſtinctly, What ſort of Religion it is, that is *in it ſelf wholly undelightful.*
- Propound ſome things to conſideration concerning it, that may tend to *beget a diſlike of it*, and ſo *incline us to look further.*

1. That we may know what we are not to take up with; becauſe our preſent Subject confines us to this one meaſure of Religion, *that it be delightful*, it will be proper to limit our Diſcourſe to this Character only of the Religion we are to paſs from, as vain and worthleſs, *viz. That which is without delight*; which it alſo will be ſufficient to inſiſt on to our preſent purpoſe. For ſince (as hath been largely ſhewn) the *delightfulneſs* of the Religion which is true, and living is *intrinſecal*, and *moſt natural* to it, 'twill therefore be certainly conſequent, that which is not *delightful* is dead, and can ſerve for nothing.

And

And yet here it will be neceſſary, for Caution, to inſert,

1. That even ſuch Religion as is true and living, and conſequently in it ſelf *delightful*, yet may *by accident* ſometimes, not appear or be thought ſo; becauſe either variety of occaſions may divert from minding, or ſome imbittering diſtemper of ſpirit may hinder the preſent reliſhing of that pleaſure which is truly in it. As a man may eat and feed on that, which is very ſavoury and good; and yet, though his taſte be not vitiated, but becauſe he reflects not, may not every moment have that preſent apprehenſion that it is ſo; much more if the Organs of taſte be under a preſent diſtemper. But, if they be not ſo, any one's asking him how he likes that diſh, (becauſe that occaſions a more expreſs animadverſion), will alſo draw from him an acknowledgment that it is pleaſant and ſavoury.

2. That a dead Religion may be thought *delightful*; and through the ill temper of the ſubject, a pleaſure may be apprehended in it, which doth not naturally ariſe from it; that is, The meer external part of Religion may be flexible, and be accidentally perverted into a ſubſerviency to ſome purpoſes which Religion of it ſelf intends not, in reſpect whereof a *delight* may injuriouſly (and as by a rape) be taken in it, as is ſaid by the Prophet of an hypocritical people, *Yet they* Iſa. 58. 2. *ſeek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a Nation that did righteouſneſs; they take delight in approaching to God.*

Therefore, that which is here intended, is not, that the Religion ſhould be rejected, in ſome preſent exerciſes whereof we have not the actual reliſh of a preſent pleaſure (as that ſhould not be embraced, wherein upon any whatſoever terms we find it); but that which can rightfully, and upon juſt terms afford us none; and which upon our utmoſt enquiry and ſearch, *cannot* in reaſon (as it is not unfit that ſpiritual reaſon ſhould be imployed in making a judgment what *may*) be thought ſpiritually *delectable*.

We ſhall therefore in ſome particular heads, give a ſhort account of ſuch Religion, as rationally cannot but be judged undelightful, or which hath not that in it which can yield pleaſure to a ſound and well-complexioned ſpirit; but that if any be taken therein, that very pleaſure is ſo *unnatural* and out of kind, as to be the argument rather of a diſeaſe in the Subject, than of any real goodneſs in the thing it ſelf.

Whereunto we only premiſe this two-fold general Rule, whereby an undue and unnatural delight may be eſtimated and judg'd of.

1. That ſuch *delight* may be juſtly deem'd unnatural which is taken in any thing beſides, and with the neglect of the proper uſe and end which it moſt fitly ſerves for.

2. Such as is accompanied with a *real hurt*, greater than the *delight* can countervail, or as is ſo far from taking in *profit* and benefit in conjunction with it, as that the damage and preju-

prejudice which it cannot recompence, is inſeparable from it; which *rules* will be the more fitly applicable to the preſent caſe; for that (as hath been formerly obſerved) the *delight* which accompanies the acts and exerciſes of Religion, or that flow from it, though it be natural thereto, yet is not the only or chief end of thoſe acts; but they have another more important end, unto the proſecution whereof by ſuch acts *delight* is only adherent: Whence the *delight* cannot but be moſt prepoſterous and perverſe, which is taken in ſuch things as do either not ſerve the more principal deſign of Religion; or much more that are repugnant and deſtructive of it.

By theſe *Rules* we may plainly ſee what *delight* in the general is to be accounted *undue*.

As by *the former Rule* we would juſtly reckon that an undue *delight* which a man ſhould take in his food, if he only pleaſe himſelf with the looking on the handſom garniſhing of the diſhes, which he loaths in the mean time and refuſes to taſte; or which a covetous *miſer* takes in having wealth *hoarded up*, which he is pleaſed often to view and cannot endure to uſe.

And *by the latter*, That were moſt irrational *delight*, which in a Fever one ſhould take in gratifying his diſtempered appetite, whereby he doth not ſo much relieve nature as feed his diſeaſe.

And ſo we may ſay, *that* Religion is undelightful, *i. e.* not duly *delightful*.

1. *Which conſiſts wholly in revolving in ones own mind the notions that belong to Religion, without either the experience, or the deſign and expectation of having the heart and converſation formed according to them.* So the caſe is with ſuch as content themſelves to yield the priniciples of *Religion* true, and behold with a notional aſſent and approbation the connexion & agreement of one thing with another: But do never conſider the tendency and aim of the whole; or that the Truth of the Goſpel is the *Doctrine*
1 Tim. 6. 3 *that is according to godlineſs*; or ſuch as is purſuant to the deſign of making men godly; of transforming them into the Image of God, and framing them to an entire ſubjection to his holy and acceptable will; that bethink not themſelves the Truth is never learned *as it is in Jeſus*, except it be to the *renewing the Spirit*
Eph. 4. *of the mind*, the *putting off the old man*, and *the putting on of the new.* When this is never conſidered, but men do only know, that they may know; and are never concerned further about the great things of God, than only to take notice that ſuch things there are offered to their view which carry with them the appearance of Truth, but mind them no more than the affairs of *Eutopia*, or the world in the Moon; what *delight* is taken in this knowledg, is ſurely moſt perverſe. There is a pleaſure indeed in knowing things, and in apprehending the coherence of one Truth with another; but he that ſhall allow himſelf to ſpeculate only about things wherein his life is concerned, and ſhall entertain himſelf with *delight*

delight in agitating in his mind certain curious general notions concerning a *diſeaſe* or a *crime* that threatens him with preſent death, or what might be a *remedy* or *defence* in ſuch a caſe, without any thought of applying ſuch things to his own caſe, or that the caſe is his own, one may ſay of ſuch pleaſure *it is mad*; or of this *delight*, *What doth it?* or he that only ſurfeits his eye with beholding the food he is to live by, and who in the mean time languiſhes in the want of appetite, and a ſickly loathing of his proper nutriment; ſurely ſuch a one hath a pleaſure that no ſober man would think worth the having.

And the more any one doth *only notionally* know in the matters of Religion, ſo as that the temper of his ſpirit remains altogether unſutable and oppoſite to the deſign and tendency of the things known; the more he hath lying ready to come in judgment againſt him; and if therefore he count the things excellent which he knows, and only pleaſe himſelf with his own knowledg of them, 'tis but alike caſe as if a man ſhould be much *delighted* to behold his own condemnation written in a fair and beautiful hand: Or, as if one ſhould be pleaſed with the glittering of that ſword which is directed againſt his own heart, and muſt be the preſent inſtrument of death to him: And ſo little pleaſant is the caſe of ſuch a perſon in it ſelf, who thus ſatisfies his own curioſity with the concernments of eternal life and death, that any ſerious perſon would tremble on his behalf, at that wherein he takes

pleaſure, and apprehend juſt horrour in that ſtate of the caſe whence he draws matter of *delight.*

2. 'Tis yet a more inſipid and guſtleſs Religion which too many place *in ſome peculiar opinions, that are either falſe, and contrary to Religion, or doubtful and cumberſome to it, or little and inconſiderable, and therefore certainly alien to it, and impertinent.* For if that Religion only be truly *delightful* which hath a vital influence on the heart and practice, as that muſt needs be indelectable, which is only ſo notionally converſant about the greateſt *truths*, as that it *hath no ſuch influence*; much more is *that* ſo, which is ſo wholly converſant about matters either oppoſite or irrelative hereto, as that it *can have none.* It muſt here be acknowledg'd that ſome Doctrines not only not revealed in the Word of God, but which are contrary thereto, may (being thought true) occaſion the excitation of ſome inward affection, and have an indirect influence to the regulating of practice alſo, ſo as to repreſs ſome groſſer enormities. As the falſe notions of Pagans concerning the Deity, which have led them to Idolatry, have ſtruck their minds with a certain kind of reverence of *inviſible powers*, and perhaps rendered ſome more ſober and leſs vicious than had they been deſtitute of all Religious ſentiments.

And yet the good which hath hence enſued, is not to be refer'd *to the particular principles of Idolatry*, which were falſe; but to the more *general principles of Religion*, which were true.

true. Yea, and though ſuch falſe principles viewed alone, and by themſelves, may poſſibly infer ſomwhat of good; yet that is *by accident only*, and through the ſhort-ſightedneſs and ignorance of them with whom they obtain; who, if they did conſider their incoherence with other common notions and principles moſt certainly true, would receive by them (if thought the only Principles of Religion) ſo much the greater hurt, and become ſo much the more hopeleſly and incurably wicked: As moſt manifeſtly the principles which (lookt upon by themſelves) *while they are reckon'd true*, do lead to Idolatry, and conſequently, by that miſtake only, to ſome Religion; do yet, *being really falſe*, lead to Atheiſm, and *of themſelves* tend to ſubvert and deſtroy all Religion. Therefore ſuch Doctrines as cohere not with the general frame of Truth, whatever their particular aſpect may be, conſidered apart and by themſelves, are yet *in their natural tendency* oppoſite and deſtructive to the true deſign of Religion, and the pleaſure which they can any way afford, is only ſtol'n and vain; ſuch as a perſon takes in ſwallowing a potion that is pleaſant, but which, if it perform what belongs to it, he muſt with many a ſickly qualm refund and diſgorge back again.

We alſo acknowledg ſome Truths of *leſs importance*, may be ſaid to concern *practice*, though not ſo *immediately*. Nor is it therefore the deſign of this Diſcourſe to derogate from any ſuch, that are of apparently Divine

Revelation or Inſtitution; which, however they juſtly be reckoned *leſs than ſome other things*, yet for that very reaſon *as they are reveal'd by God for ſuch an end*, are by *no means to be eſteemed little*, or inconſiderable; be their ſubſerviency to the great deſign of Religion never ſo remote. *Upon the account of which ſubſerviency*, they are alſo to be eſteem'd *delectable*, that is, *in proportion thereto*; but when they are ſo eſteem'd *beyond that proportion*, and are exalted into an undue preference to their very end it ſelf; ſo as that, in compariſon of them, the great things of Religion are reckoned low, frigid, ſapleſs things; when men ſet their hearts upon them *abſtractly, and without conſideration of their reference and uſefulneſs to the greater things of Religion*; The delight that is ſo taken in them, argues but the diſeaſe of the mind that takes it, and ſo great a degree of dotage, that a ſerious perſon would wonder how men can pleaſe themſelves with ſuch matters, without conſidering, and with the neglect of ſo great things they have relation to.

3. And hither is to be refer'd the much leſs rational pleaſure which is taken by ſome in the meer dreſs wherewith ſuch notions and opinions may be artificially clothed by themſelves or others; Rhetorical flouriſhes, a ſet of fine words, handſom cadencies and periods, fanciful repreſentations, little tricks and pieces of wit, and (which cannot pretend ſo high) pitiful quibbles and gingles, inverſions of ſentences, the pedantick rhyming

of

of words, yea and an affected tone, or even a great noiſe, things that are neither capable of gratifying the *Chriſtian* nor the *man*; without which even the moſt important weighty matters do to ſo ſqueamiſh ſtomachs ſeem guſtleſs and unſavoury, and are reckon'd dull and flat things. And moſt plain it is, (though it is not ſtrange, that ſo trifling minds ſhould impoſe upon themſelves by ſo thin a ſophiſm), that ſuch are in a great miſtake, whoſe *delight* being wholly taken up in theſe trifles, do hereupon think they taſte the *delights* of Religion; for theſe are nothing of it, are found about it only accidentally; and by a moſt unhappy accident too, as ill (*for the moſt of theſe things*) agreeing to it, and no more becoming it than a Fool's Coat doth a prudent grave perſon; and *the beſt of them* agreeing to it but in common with any thing elſe, about which ſuch arts may be uſed; ſo that they are no way *any thing of it*, or more peculiarly belonging to it, than to any theam or ſubject beſides, unto which ſuch ornaments (as they are thought) can be added. How miſerably therefore do they cheat themſelves, who, becauſe they hear with pleaſure a diſcourſe upon ſome head of Religion thus garniſhed, according to their idle trifling humour; and becauſe they are taken with the contrivance of ſome ſentences, or affected with the loudneſs of the voice, or have their imagination tickled with ſome phantaſtical illuſtrations, preſently conclude themſelves to be in a *Religious tranſport*, when the things

that

that have pleaſed them have no affinity or alliance with Religion, befal to it but by chance, and are in themſelves things quite of another Country!

4. Of the like ſtrain is the Religion *that is made up all of talk. And ſuch like are that ſort of perſons, who love to diſcourſe of thoſe great things of God wherewith it was never their deſign or aim to have their hearts ſtamped, or their lives commanded and governed.* Who invert that which was the ancient glory of the Chriſtian Church, *We do not ſpeak great things, but live them.* And are pleaſed with only the noiſe of their own (moſt commonly inſignificant ſenſleſs) words; unto whom how ungrateful a reliſh would that Precept have, *Be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak*!

And how much to be regretted a thing is it, That the *delights* of *practical living Religion* ſhould be ſo loſt, and vaniſh into a meer lip-labour! Things of this nature are to be eſtimated by their *end*, and the *temper of Spirit* which accompanies them; Which unto a ſerious and prudent obſerver, are commonly very diſcernible and eaſie to be diſtinguiſht. It's an amiable lovely thing to behold thoſe that are intent upon the great buſineſs of Religion *themſelves*, provoking others alſo *with ſerious gravity* unto *love* and *good works*. And it will ever ſtand as a monumental character of them *that feared the Lord*, that *they ſpake often one to another* upon this account. Mal. 3. But the *pretence of this* is odious, when the *thing deſigned* is nothing but *ſelf-recommendation*,

dation, and the ſpirit of the pretenders is viſibly vain and empty; and when it is apparent they take *delight*, not in *the things they ſpeak of*, but only in *this thing* it ſelf, *ſpeaking much*. No breath is then more fulſom; And the better the things are, the worſe it is to have no more ſavour of them.

5. Again, *The Religion is a-kin to this, which ſtands all in hearing.* 'Tis as remote (at leaſt) from the heart, when it is wholly placed in the *ear*, as when it's all in the *tongue*. As it is with them that are *hearers only, not doers of* Jam. 1. *the word, deceiving their own ſouls.* When the Preacher is to them *as a very lovely ſong,* Ezek. 33. *of one that can play well on an inſtrument, and they hear his words, but do them not.* And it is natural to the ſame ſort of perſons to be pleaſed indifferently with either of theſe, as the *Athenians* were in *hearing* or *telling* ſome new thing. Only that this difference moſt commonly appears with the perſons we intend, that when *the things they delight to hear*, muſt be ever *new*, or at leaſt *new dreſt*; the *things they ſpeak*, ſhall be everlaſtingly *the ſame.* How perverſe a *delight* is that? Whereas 'tis the glory of ſubſtantial Religion, that the principal things of it can never grow old, or be dry: Their ears ſtill itch after novelties; a plain argument that it is not *Religion it ſelf* that pleaſes them (which cannot change), but the variable acceſſory modes of repreſenting it.

However, there is certainly very often a diſtemper appearing among thoſe that profeſs

ſeſs Religion, *in coveting to hear unto exceſs*, and beyond what is either *ſutable* or *deſigned* unto uſe and profit. When the pleaſure of a delightful revolving of the ever-freſh and fragrant Truths of the Goſpel, and reducing them to anſwerable practice, is loſt and ſtifled, by heaping on of more than can be digeſted. And many an hopeful birth of pious and holy diſpoſitions, affections, and good works, is ſuppreſſed or enfeebled by an untimely ſuperfetation.

6. Laſtly, *'Tis a moſt undelightful Religion, which conſiſts intirely in the external additaments and forms of Worſhip, which this or that party have choſen to affix to it.* Yea, though thoſe forms be never ſo certainly of Divine Preſcription; which, however God hath appointed them, were never appointed or intended by him to be *our Religion*, but to be ſubſervient helps and means to it. Being enlivened by it, they are comly and delightful; but ſever'd and cut off from it, or the courſe of vital ſpirit that ſhould flow into them being obſtructed and repreſt, they have no more pleaſure in them than a dead arm or finger. Such Divine appointments themſelves, ſevered from the things wherein ſubſtantial Religion conſiſts, have been *an abomination to the Lord, (Your new Moons and Sabbaths, &c. my Soul hates)*, and then ſure there is little reaſon *they ſhould be a delight to us.* If they be, it is as fond and trifling a *delight*, as when one hath the opportunity of converſing with ſome excellent perſon, to neglect all his

Iſa. 1.

his wiſe ſayings, and pleaſant inſtructive diſcourſes, and only to pleaſe ones ſelf in viewing his handſom apparel; yea, though I ſhould know at the ſame time, that I thereby greatly diſpleaſe him whom (as is alſo ſuppoſable) I were greatly concern'd to pleaſe. Thus it is with them that mind only the *ſolemnity* of Gods worſhip, not the *deſign*. And more groſs the matter is, with ſuch as by their obſervance of the external modes of Religion, think to expiate the badneſs of their moſt vicious converſation; *That will ſteal, and murder, and commit adultery, oppreſs the ſtranger, the fatherleſs and the widow; and yet preſume to ſtand before the Lord in his houſe, and cry, the Temple of the Lord, &c.* Jer. 7. This is the Phariſaical Religion, that is ſcrupulous in tything *Mint*, *Anniſe*, and *Cummin*, and neglects the weighty things of the Law, *Juſtice*, *Judgment*, and *Truth*.

Theſe men *delight* in what not only is *dead in it ſelf*, but will be *mortal unto them*. And if the *Divine* Inſtitution of the things wherewith they ſo vainly pleaſe themſelves, will not bear them out, much leſs *their own*; be their diſcriminating denomination or profeſſion what it will.

And now all theſe things (whether ſeverally or together) and whatever elſe of like kind do at the beſt make but a *dead*, and conſequently an *undelightful Religion*, ſuch as hath no *pleaſure* in it, becauſe it hath no *life*: It remains therefore,

2. To ſhew, *how unfit ſuch a Religion is*

to

to be choſen or reſted in. And ſurely ſince (as appears from what was formerly ſaid) the perſwading of men to become *religious or godly*, is but an inviting them to a ſtate and courſe wherein they may *delight themſelves with God*; or to a life of pure and heavenly pleaſure; That is only the *vain ſhew of Religion*, which affords *nothing of that pleaſure.* And how unreaſonable and fooliſh is it when Religion it ſelf is the thing we pretend, to let our ſelves be mock'd (as we mock others, and vainly attempt to mock Him alſo, who is not to be mocked) with the meer empty ſhew and appearance of it!

That we may be here ſomewhat more particular, let it be conſidered,

1. That the Religion which is *in it ſelf undelightful, is*, for the ſame reaſon for which it is ſo, *uncapable of growth*; that is, becauſe it is a *dead thing.* For that reaſon it is without *delight*; and for the ſame reaſon admits not of improvement: It wants the ſelf-improving Principle. *He that drinks of that water* (ſaith our Saviour) *which I ſhall give*
Joh. 4. *him, it ſhall be in him as a well of water ſpringing up in him unto life eternal.* That only Principle of all true Religion and Godlineſs, *The Divine Nature*, the *Seed of God*, is of that heavenly tendency, it aims and aſpires upward, and will never ceaſe ſhooting up till it reach Heaven; and the pleaſure and *delightfulneſs* of it ſtands much *in its continual ſpringing up towards a perfect ſtate*, from a grain of Muſtard-ſeed to the talneſs of a Cedar.

'Tis

'Tis pleaſant to behold its conſtant undecaying greenneſs and verdure; ſuch as renders its Subject *like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth fruit in ſeaſon, whoſe leaf alſo doth not wither, and whatſoever he doth proſpers.* Or as plants *ſet in the Houſe of the Lord, that flouriſh in the Courts of their God. That ſhall ſtill bring forth fruit even in old age, and be fat and flouriſhing.* 'The dead dry forms, or other appendages of Religion, that have no communion with a living root, or the Religion that is only made up of theſe, gives no ſuch hope of improvement. A great and moſt conſiderable prejudice againſt any thing that pretends to the name of Religion; which being at firſt an imperfect thing (as that eſpecially which it ſelf is but pretence and ſhadow cannot but be) if it ſhall never be expected to be better, can have little claim or title to any excellency. The value even of true Religion, though it be of an excellent nature and kind, ſtands much in the hopefulneſs and improveableneſs of it; and is not ſo much to be conſidered in reſpect of *what it is*, as what it *ſhall come to.* This lank ſpiritleſs Religion aſſoon as you aſſume and take it up, you know the beſt of it. 'Tis not of a growing thriving kind; Never expect better of it. 'Tis true, the *notional knowledg, opinionativeneſs*, and *external obſervances*, which we have ſpoken of, may be ſo increaſed, *as an heap of ſand may be*; but the Religion of ſuch *grows not* as a thing that hath *life in it*, by *vital ſelf-improvement.* Pſal. 1. Pſal. 92.

2. *Nor*

2. *Nor* for the ſame reaſon *can it be a laſting thing.* For it wants what ſhould maintain it. It will, as a veſture, wear and grow old; or, being as a cloak put on to ſerve a preſent turn, is, when that turn is ſerved, as eaſily thrown off, *i. e.* being found to be more *cumberſom* than *uſeful.* What hath living Union with a mans own ſelf, it's neither his eaſe nor convenience; he neither affects, nor can endure to lay it aſide.

It is given as a character of an *hypocrite* (one who therefore muſt be underſtood to carry with him ſome ſhew and face of Religion, and to want the living Root and Principle of it) that he is inconſtant in his Reli-
Job 27.10. gion; *will he at all times call upon God?* or will he be conſtantly religious? The *interrogative* form of ſpeech implies *more* than a meer *negative*; That is, doth not only ſay that he *will not* at all times call upon God, but that 'tis *abſurd* to ſay or think *that he will.* For it is an appeal to common reaſon in the caſe; as if it had been ſaid, Can any man think that ſuch a ones Religion will be laſting? It imports a diſdain it ſhould be thought ſo. What? *he* call upon God at all times; a likely thing! no; the matter is plain, his Religion is meaſured by his ſecular intereſt, and he will only be ſo long Religious as will ſerve that purpoſe. And the reaſon is plainly aſſigned in the foregoing words, *Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty?* His Religion hath no *delight* with it; 'tis a languid faint ſpiritleſs thing, a dead form. If it had life, it would have pleaſure in it;

and

and then the ſame vital principle that would make it pleaſant, would make it laſting and permanent alſo.

3. While it doth laſt, *it wants the fruit and profit, which ſhould be deſigned and ſought by Religion*; even for the ſame reaſon for which it is without *delight*, it is alſo fruitleſs and vain, *i. e. becauſe it hath no life in it:* So that all that is done in this way of Religion is only *labour and toil* to no purpoſe. And what *do* or *can* we propoſe to our ſelves from Religion, as the proper deſign of it, but *to have our ſpirits fitted to the honouring and enjoying of God, unto ſervice to him, and bleſſedneſs in him*; and that we may hereupon, actually both ſerve and enjoy him? Both theſe chiefly depend upon his favourable acceptance of us. He will neither reckon himſelf ſerved by us, nor allow himſelf to be enjoyed, if he be not pleaſed with us. And how ſhall we expect to pleaſe him with *that*, wherewith, the more our minds come to be rectified and made conformable to the rule of righteouſneſs and life, the more impoſſible it is that we can be pleaſed our ſelves? Can we pleaſe him by a Religion that is in it ſelf unſavoury, ſpiritleſs and dead; and that affords not *to our ſelves* the leaſt reliſh of true pleaſure? And partly the ſucceſs of our Religion in the mentioned reſpects, depends upon the due temperament our ſpirits receive by it; But what good impreſſion can that light chaffie empty Religion, that hath been deſcribed, ever be hoped to make there? Is it a likely means of

refining and bettering our ſpirits? Even as it is void of ſpiritual *delight* it's alſo of ſpiritual benefit; for certainly our ſpirits are like to embrace and retain nothing in which they can take no pleaſure. How vain then is that Religion by which we can neither pleaſe God nor profit our ſelves?

4. *It ought to be conſidered how fooliſh a thing it is, and unworthy of a reaſonable creature to do that in a continued courſe and* ſeries *of actions wherein we can have no deſign, and do aim at nothing*; Even they that place their Religion in things ſo remote and alien to the Spirit and power of it, do yet ſpend a conſiderable part of their lifes-time in thoſe things. And how becoming is it of a man to have ſpent ſo much of his time in doing nothing? And that from week to week, or from day to day, the ſeaſons ſhould return, of which he hath conſtantly this to ſay, Now comes the time of doing that whereof I can give no account why I do it!

That there ſhould be ſo conſtant a defalcation of ſuch portions of time for that which a man can neither call buſineſs nor recreation, which tends to no advantage in any kind. For it tends not to promote his ſecular intereſt but in ſo indirect and by-a-way, and with ſo ſiniſter and baſely-oblique reſpects, as an honeſt man would abhor, and an ingenious man be aſhamed to profeſs; And his ſpiritual and eternal intereſt much leſs. This were therefore the ſame thing as to proclaim ones ſelf a fool or a vain trifler. The things that have

have been inſtanc't in (conſidered ſo abſtractly from the ſubſtance of Religion, as we have conſidered them) being ſuch, *ſome of them*, as carry not with them ſo much as that very *ſhew of wiſdom*, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks: And *others of them*, ſo faint a ſhew, as it ill becomes a wiſe man to be pleaſed with, while they do his better part no good, and carry not *that ſhew* in any *proviſion* (as that word Τιμὴ ſometimes ſignifies) *for the ſatisfying of the fleſh.* Col. 2. 23.

And yet it is to be withal remembred that this (*waſte and loſt*) time of their life, is all that ſuch perſons allot to their everlaſting concernments; and that the things which have been mentioned (ſome or other of them; for all do not always concur with the ſame perſons) are not made *ſubſervient to*; but are *ſubſtituted in the room and ſtead of* the Religion by which thoſe concernments ſhould be provided for. And is this a wiſe proviſion for Eternity? What, man? A few empty unimproved notions! a by-opinion or two! the flouriſhes of a little pedantique art tickling thy toyiſh fancy! the motion of thy (*only*) buſie and labouring tongue! or the thirſt and ſatisfaction of thy vain ear! the bowing of thy hypocritical knee! Are theſe all that thou deſigneſt, or will mind to do for thy Soul? Are theſe like well to ſupply the place of *living Religion?* to ſerve thee inſtead of inward acquaintance with God? of being really and habitually good and holy? of doing good and walking in the path of

life? What a Soul haſt thou that can live upon chaff and air, and be ſuſtained by the wind? Haſt thou no need of quickening influence from God? no hunger after the heavenly hidden Manna? and the fruits of the Tree of Life? What uſe makeſt thou of thy Underſtanding, or of the Reaſon of a man, when thou thinkeſt ſuch empty vanities as thou truſteſt in can do the office, or attain the ends of true Religion? How much more rational were it to pretend to nothing of Religion at all, than to think ſuch a one will ſerve the turn!

5. *Conſider, what reflections are likely to be made upon this matter hereafter, when thy ſhort courſe in this world is run out.* Will it be a grateful remembrance to thee that thou waſt ſo long hovering about the borders of Religion? and waſt at the very door and wouldſt not enter in? That thou didſt ſo often think and ſpeak, and hear of the things wherein Religion ſtood, but wouldſt never allow thy ſelf to taſte the pleaſant reliſhes thereof? To have been ſo nigh to the Kingdom of God, and yet an alien to it, to *the righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt* wherein it conſiſts! That thou didſt only pleaſe thy ſelf with the painted Casket (made fine, as thou thought'ſt, but only with thine own Pencil) wherein ſo rich a Jewel was; and retaining *that*, threw'ſt away *this* as a thing of nought! will not theſe be wounding thoughts?

6. *Let it be ſeriouſly pondered how offenſive it muſt be to the jealous God that any ſhould thus trifle*

trifle with him and his holy things, under a ſhew and pretence of Religion and Devotion to him. Not to *pleaſe* him by the *ſincerity and truth of our Religion*, loſes the *end* and *reward* we would expect. But that is not all. To *provoke* him by the *hypocritical pretence and abuſe of it*, cannot but infer a ſharp *revenge* which it may be we expected not.

And let us bethink our ſelves how high the provocation is: Either we deſign to *pleaſe*, *honour* and *enjoy* him by that irrational and undelightful courſe of Religion, or we do not; If we do not, This ſignifies nothing but higheſt contempt and defiance of him; and that we care not for his favour, nor fear his diſpleaſure: Yea, inaſmuch as ſuch Religion is *pretended* as an homage to him, it *is* nothing really but moſt profane and inſolent mockery; as if we would join in the ſame breath and in the ſame act, *Hail Jeſus and Crucifie him*; and at once inveſt him with the purple Robe, and ſpit in his Face: But if we have ſuch a Deſign, and do really think to pleaſe him by ſuch trifling with him; and that theſe vain fancies and formalities ſhall make amends for all our neglects of him through the whole courſe of our lives beſides; Then how vile thoughts have we of him! what do we make of the God we ſerve? How juſtly may that be applied to us, *Ye worſhip ye know not what!* Who gave us our *Idæa* of that ever bleſſed Being? It is not God, but a deſpicable Idol of our own creating we are thinking to pleaſe. We may ſee how well he Joh. 4.

is pleaſed with the external ſhew and the appendages of Religion (which being his own appointments would in conjunction and in ſubſerviency thereto have ſignified ſomewhat, but disjoined from it, and accompanied with the neglect and abandoning of real piety, and righteouſneſs ſignified nothing but an affront to him) in that remonſtrance by the Prophet; *He that killeth an oxe is as if he ſlew a man; he that ſacrificeth a lamb as if he cut off a dogs neck; He that offereth an Oblation as if he offered ſwines blood; He that burneth Incenſe as if he bleſſed an Idol.* He is pleaſed with their *Religion* as he would be with *murder*, *profaneneſs* and *Idolatry*. And is it ſtrange this ſhould be his eſtimate, when he is hereby practically repreſented as ſuch a one that will not be *diſpleaſed* with real wickedneſs, and that will be *pleaſed* with the thinneſt and moſt ſuperficial ſhew of Devoton?

Iſa. 66. 3.

They therefore make a fair hand of their Religion, who are ſo far from pleaſing God by it and advantaging themſelves, that they wound their own Souls (as they are moſt like to do that handle ſo awkardly ſuch an edg'd tool) and render God their moſt avowed enemy. The Religion then which hath no *delight* in it hath ſo much of folly, incommodity and miſchief, that meaſuring it by the Rules which were premiſed, we may ſee ſufficient reaſon why ſuch a Religion ſhould not be choſen or reſted in. And that we are concerned to look further.

Where-

Wherefore we proceed next,

2. To the other Head we propoſed, The poſitive judgment we are to make, *What Religion is fit to be choſen*, and wherein we may ſafely acquieſce; whereof we ſhall only give the account which the ſubject we have in hand allows to be here given, *i. e. That it be ſuch as is in it ſelf rationally and juſtly delectable.* And though Religion is not to be choſen only, or chiefly, for the *delightfulneſs of it*; yet ſince, as we have ſeen, only that Religion is *true* which is *delightful*; that only which is *delightful* is fit to be *choſen.* So that this is a *certain character* (though not the *chief cauſe*) of the eligibleneſs of Religion. And when it is ſo expreſly enjoyn'd us as a duty, *To delight our ſelves in the Lord*; If, as hath been ſhew'n, this be within the meaning of the Precept, That, in the general, we delight our ſelves in a way and courſe of Religion; It is plain, ſuch Religion only can be meant or intended, as can afford us *matter of delight*, or as is in it ſelf truly and really *delectable.*

And here we ſhall not need to repeat what hath been ſo largely diſcourſed in the *former part*, tending to ſhew the rich matter of *delight* which the ſeveral exerciſes of *true living Religion*, and all the actions influenced and directed by it, do carry in them. It will only be requiſite, to offer ſomewhat partly *to direct*, partly *to excite* unto that *delightful pleaſant life.*

1. For *Direction*, Let ſuch Rules be obſerved as theſe which follow.

1. *Endeavour to have a mind well-inſtructed in the knowledg of ſuch things as more directly concern the common practice of a Religious man, as ſuch.* That is, to be throughly inſighted into *practical Truths*, or into that *Truth which is after Godlineſs.*

It hath been the merciful vouchſafement of the Divine Goodneſs, ſo to order it, that thoſe things are plain and but few, which are of more abſolute neceſſity in Religion; as may be ſeen by the ſummary accounts which we find ſometimes given thereof, *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; which two things (intimated to comprehend the whole Counſel of God) do manifeſtly *ſuppoſe* the ſtate of *apoſtacy*, and *expreſs* the way of *remedy*; whereinto, when we are brought, How ſuccinct and clear a recapitulation of our Duty have we in that of our Saviour, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind: And thou ſhalt love thy Neighbbour as thy ſelf!* To a well-complexion'd ſpirit, how comprehenſive and full, how ſavoury and acceptable will theſe things appear! Nor would ſuch a one part with the ſubſtantial fulneſs of theſe few words for all the treaſures of both the *Indies*. How truly is it called, *That good, that acceptable and perfect will of God!* And how fitly to be prefer'd before thouſands of Gold and Silver!

Act. 20.

Rom. 12. 2

Things of higheſt value are not bulky; their

their excellency is the greater by being contracted; and that, being in themſelves precious, they are ſo conveniently portable. How eaſily are theſe dictates carried about with us through our whole courſe! And how univerſally uſeful are they for the well-guiding of it, to ſuch as have a greater mind to do their duty than move queſtions about it!

Two things are both oppoſite to this Rule, and not a little prejudicial to the *delight* of Religious converſation, (by which it will appear, how conducible to it the matter here directed is), *viz.*

Exceſſive curioſity in the ſpeculation of *Truths* belonging to Religion; without deſigning to refer them to *practice*; which hath been animadverted on before. And,

An equally-exceſſive ſcrupuloſity about matters of practice. It were indeed an argument of a deſperate mind, and deſtitute of any fear of God, To be careleſs what we do, and unconcern'd whether the way we take, in this or that caſe, be right or wrong. But it is certain, there may be an exceſs in this matter, and too often is; that is, there may be a ſcrupuloſity which is both cauſleſs and endleſs. There is ſurely ſome *medium* in travelling between a careleſs wandering we mind not whether, and a perpetual anxiety whether we be in our way or no, with often going back to enquire. This would quite deſtroy both the pleaſure of the journey, and the progreſs of it. Some difficulties may occur, which ſhould juſtly occaſion one to make a ſtand and con-

conſider: But probably, very many caſes that ſome do agitate with much diſquiet to themſelves and others, would ſooneſt be expedited by *ſincerity*, and reducing them to the *Law of Love*.

It would however make much for our pleaſant delightful walking on in the way of God, To have a mind (informed once and eſtabliſht throughly in the belief of the principal Doctrines of Chriſtian Religion) well furniſht alſo with the moſt uſeful practical Precepts, which might at every turn be ready at hand to be apply'd upon emergencies; which they whom predominant ſelf-intereſt or corrupt inclination render not difficult to the apprehending of their duty, (our way is not uſually otherwiſe ſo very intricate), may cheerfully and innocently guide themſelves by. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely.* Though ſome mens way may, by the circumſtances of their conditions, be much more perplext than others, who are therefore concerned to be the more wary. But the difficult toil and tug that ſome have with themſelves, is, how by contrived explications they may make their Rule bend and yeild to their ſelf-byaſt humours and ends; which becauſe they find it not eaſie to do, with full ſatisfaction to their conſciences, (that ſee more than they would have them, and are yet not of authority enough with them to govern and command their practice), it is not ſtrange, they intangle and even loſe themſelves amongſt thorns and briars, and meet with

with little *delight* in their way. Wherefore,

2. *Be principally intent to have your Soul become habitually good and holy, by its own ſetled temper and complexion inclin'd and made ſutable to the way of righteouſneſs and life.* It was, no doubt, with a very ſweet guſt and reliſh of pleaſure, that the *Pſalmiſt* utters that gratulatory acknowledgment of the Divine goodneſs in this, *He reſtoreth my Soul; he leadeth me in paths of righteouſneſs, for his names ſake.* Pſal. 23. 2. The paths of righteouſneſs are very agreeable and pleaſant to a reſtored, a ſound and healthy Soul; to one that is now got into a good habit, and a ſetled ſtate of ſpiritual ſtrength. You may therefore take the meaning and ſubſtance of this *Precept*, in the Apoſtles (more-authoritative) words, *Be ye transformed in the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, that acceptable and perfect will of God.* Rom. 12. 2. You can never (*q. d.*) have a proof it (the very palate of your Soul will be vicious and ſtill diſaffected till then, that is,) till that transformation and renewing change have paſt upon you. Then it will be pleaſant to you *to know the will of God*; your *delight* will be *in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law you will meditate both day and night.* And it will be more pleaſant *to do it.* You will eſteem *the words of his mouth as your appointed food, and it will be as your meat and drink to do his will.* You can eaſily apprehend how toilſom and painful any thing of buſineſs and labour is to a perſon

ſon that languiſhes under ſome enfeebling lazy diſeaſe: A like caſe it is, when you would put one upon doing of any thing ſpiritually good, that is liſtleſs, indiſpos'd, *to every good work reprobate.* How will the heart recoil and give back! with how vehement a reluctation will it reſiſt the propoſal, as if you were urging it upon flames or the Swords point!

Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God, and is not ſubject to his law, nor indeed can be.* But

Pſal. 40. 8. when once *the law of God is within your heart, you will delight to do his will.* To one that is

1 Joh. 5. born of God, and hath (therefore) overcome the world, his commands are not grievous. Know therefore, you muſt *be good*

Pſal. 119. 68. *doing good* with any delight, in conformity to the bleſſed God himſelf (your pattern),

Jer. 9. 23. who therefore *exerciſes loving-kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth*, as *delighting in theſe things.* You muſt be partaker of a Divine nature, and have the heart-rectifying communication before diſcourſed of, and become *Gods own workmanſhip* (a ſecond time)

Eph. 2. *created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works.* 'Tis not to be hoped, it can be delightful to act againſt inclination; or that a forced imitation of that *good* whereof you want the implanted vital principle, can be any more pleaſing to you than it is to God, whom you cannot mock or impoſe upon by your moſt elaborate or ſpecious diſguiſes. And therefore, ſince that holy heart-rectitude muſt be had, it muſt be *ſought* earneſtly and without reſt. Often ought

ought Heaven to be viſited with ſuch ſighs and longings ſent up thither, *O that my ways were directed to keep thy righteous judgments.* Pſal. 119. *Let my heart be ſound in thy ſtatutes, that I be not aſhamed.* And it ſhould be ſought with expectation of good-ſpeed and without deſpair, remembring we are told, *If we ask, we ſhall receive; if we ſeek, we ſhall find; if we knock, it ſhall be opened unto us*; yea, that our heavenly Father will much more readily give his Holy Spirit to them that ask, than you would bread to your Child that calls for it, rather than a ſtone.

3. *When once you find your ſpirit is become in any meaſure well-inclin'd, and begins to ſavour that which is truly good; know yet, that it needs your continual inſpection and care, to cheriſh good principles and repreſs evil ones.* Your work is not done as ſoon as you begin to live; as care about an Infant ceaſes not as ſoon as it is born. Let it be therefore your conſtant buſineſs, to tend your inward man; otherwiſe all things will ſoon be out of courſe: God hath coupled *delight* with the *labour* of a Chriſtian, not with the *ſloth* and neglect of himſelf; *The heart muſt then be kept with all* Prov. 4. *diligence*, or above all keeping, in as much as out of it are the *iſſues of life*: All vital principles are lodg'd there; and only the genuine iſſues of ſuch as are good and holy, will yeild you pleaſure. The exerciſes of Religion will be *pleaſant* when they are *natural*, and flow eaſily from their own fountain; but great care muſt be taken that the *fountain*

tain be kept pure. There are other ſprings beſides, which will be apt to intermingle therewith their bitter waters, or a root of bitterneſs, whoſe fruit is deadly, *even that evil thing, and bitter forſaking the Lord.* I wonder not, if they taſte little of the *delights* of Religion that take no heed to their ſpirits. Such a curſe is upon the nature of man, as is upon the ground which was curſed for his ſake, (till the bleſſing of *Abraham* through Gal. 3. 14. Jeſus Chriſt do take place, even the Promiſe of the Spirit), that it brings forth naturally thorns and thiſtles, and mingles ſorrows with his bread. But that promiſed bleſſing, that will enable a man *to eat with pleaſure*, comes not all at once; nor do the encreaſes of it come on, or the pleaſant fruits of righteouſneſs ſpring up, but in them that *give all di-* 2 Pet. 1. *ligence, to add to their faith, vertue; and to vertue, knowledg; and to knowledg, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godlineſs; and to godlineſs, brotherly-kindneſs; and to brotherly-kindneſs, charity:* Which would make *that we be not barren nor unfruitful in the knowledg of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Otherwiſe, look in upon thy Soul when thou wilt, and thou wilt have no other than the diſmal proſpect of miſerable waſtes and deſolation. Conſider it ſeriouſly, wretched man! who tilleſt thy Field, but not thy Soul; and loveſt to ſee thy Garden neat and flouriſhing, but letteſt thy Spirit lye as a neglected thing, and as if it were not thine.

We are directed for the moderating of our

our care in our earthly concernments, to *conſider the Lillies how they grow without their own toil*, and are beautifully array'd without their ſpinning; But we are taught by no ſuch inſtances, to divert or remit our care of our inward man. To theſe concernments, let us then apply and bend our ſelves; That is, carefully to obſerve the firſt ſtirrings of our thoughts and deſires; to animadvert upon our inclinations aſſoon as they can come in view, upon ourdeſigns in their very formation; and enquire concerning each, whence is it? from a goodPrinciple or a bad? whither tends it? to good or hurt? will not this deſign, if proſecuted, prove an unjuſtifiable ſelf-indulgence? Does it not tend to an unlawful gratifying of the fleſh, and fulfilling ſome luſts thereof? If ſo, let it be lop't off out of hand, and the axe be laid even to the root: ſtrike at it, favour it not: Think with thy ſelf, this, if ſpared, will breed me ſorrow; ſo much as I give to it, I take away from the comfort of my life; and ſpend of the ſtock of my ſpiritual *delight in God*; Shall I let ſin, the tormentor of my Soul, live and be mantain'd at ſo coſtly a rate? If any good inclination diſcover it ſelf, cheriſh it, confirm and ſtrengthen it. *Look up*, and pray down a further quickening influence; Say with thy ſelf, now that heavenly Spirit of Life and Grace begins to breath, More of this pleaſant vital breath thou bleſſed and holy Spirit! Account this a Seed-time, Now the *light and gladneſs* are a ſowing in thy ſoul (which are wont to be for the

righteous and upright in heart), and do promiſe ere long, a joyful Harveſt.

But if thou wilt not obſerve how things go with thy Soul, deſpair that they will ever go well.

4. *Be frequent and impartial in the actual exerciſe of gracious Principles*; or *in practiſing and doing as they direct*: Your *actual delight* ariſes from and accompanies your *holy actions themſelves*, and is to be perceived and taſted in them; not in the meer inclination to them which is not ſtrong enough to go forth into act. And as theſe Principles are *more frequently exerciſed*, they grow more lively and vigorous, and will thence act more ſtrongly and pleaſantly; ſo that your *delight* in *doing good*, will grow with the Principles it proceeds from.

But then you muſt be impartial and *even-handed* herein, as well as *frequent*; and run the whole compaſs of that Duty which belongs to you as a Chriſtian. *Exerciſe your-*
1 Tim. 4. *ſelf* (as we find the direction is) *unto godlineſs*; and in ſuch acts and parts of godlineſs chiefly and in the firſt place, as may be the exerciſe of the mind and ſpirit, in oppoſition to the *bodily exerciſe* (whether ſeverities impoſed upon, or performances that require the Miniſtery of that groſſer part) to which this nobler kind of exerciſe is juſtly prefer'd. Turn the powers of your ſoul upon God; Act *ſeaſonably* the ſeveral graces of the Spirit that terminate directly upon him. Let none grow out of uſe. At ſome times *Repentance*, at others

others *Faith*, now your *Love*, then your *Fear*; none of theſe are placed in you, or are ſanctified in vain. Retire much with God; learn and habituate your ſelves unto ſecret converſe with him; contemplate his Nature, Attributes and Works for your excitation to holy *Adoration*, *Reverence* and *Praiſe*.

And be much exerciſed in the *open Solemnities* of his Worſhip; there endeavouring that though your inward man bear not the *only*, it may the *principal* part. How delightful a thing is it, to be paying actual avow'd homage to the great Lord of Heaven and Earth before Angels and Men!

And never think your Religious and Devotional Exerciſes can acquit you, or ſupply the want and excuſe the abſence of *Sobriety* and *Righteouſneſs*. Exerciſe a juſt authority over your ſelves. Keep your imagination, paſſions, ſenſitive appetite under a due reſtraint, ſo as to be moderate in your deſires and enjoyments, patient as to your wants and ſufferings: Do to others as you would be done unto: Study common good: Endeavour, ſo far as your capacity can extend, all about you may be the better for you: Forbear and forgive the injurious, relieve the neceſſitous, delight in good men, pity the bad, be grateful towards friends, mild and unrevengeful towards enemies, juſt towards all: Abhor to do not only a diſhoneſt, but even a mean and unworthy act, for any ſelf-advantage: And all this out of an awful and

dutiful reſpect to God; by which the ordinary actions of your life may become as ſo many acts of Religion, or be directed and influenc't thereby, tinctured as it were with the ſavour of godlineſs. Paſs thus, in your continual practice, through the whole circle of Chriſtian Duties and Graces, with an equal *reſpect to all Gods Commandments*, not ſo partially addicting your ſelves to one ſort of exerciſe, as to diſuſe and neglect the reſt; which kind of partiality is that which ſtarves Religion, and ſtifles the delight of it.

There are thoſe that affect the reputation of being ſober, juſt, kind, charitable perſons, and do appear ſuch, who yet are great ſtrangers to God, and to the more noble exerciſes of the Divine Life, know not what belongs to communion with God, live not in his love and converſe, ſavour not heaven; have not ſo much as the taſte of the great vital powers of the world to come. Others, that pretend to much acquaintance with God, and are much taken up in diſcourſing of his love, and of intimacies with him, that count Juſtice and Charity mean things, and much beneath them; can allow themſelves to be covetous, oppreſſive, fraudulent, wrathful, malicious, peeviſh, fretful, diſcontented, proud, cenſorious, mercileſs; and ſo glory in a Religion which no one is the better for, and themſelves leaſt of all; and which is quite of another ſtamp from the *pure Religion and un-*
Jam. 1. 27. *defiled*, which the Apoſtle deſcribes and recommends. And certainly, their Religion hath

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as little of pleaſure in it to themſelves, as it hath of beauty and ornament in the ſight of others. So maim'd a Religion can be accompanied with little delight. Would it not detract much from the natural pleaſure of a mans life, if he ſhould loſe an arm or a leg? or have them uſeleſs and unſerviceable? Or if he ſhould be deprived of ſome of his ſenſes, or natural faculties, ſo as to be uncapable of ſome of the more principal functions of life? And if we ſhould ſuppoſe the *new creature* alike maimed and defective, will there not be a proportionable diminution of its delight? But the Spirit of God is the Author of no ſuch imperfect productions; and therefore the total abſence of any holy diſpoſition will not argue the *true delight* of ſuch a one to be *little*, but *none at all.* However, let all the integral parts of the *new man* be ſuppoſed formed at firſt, and exiſting together; when this creature is thus entirely framed, it is our buſineſs to ſee to the due exerciſe, and thereby to the improvement and growth of the ſeveral parts, wherein if one be neglected, it infers a general enfeeblement of the whole. *Let patience have its perfect work* (ſaith that Apoſtle), *that ye may be perfect, &c.* Implying, That not only the abſence of that one grace, but its not being throughly exerciſed, would render us very defective Chriſtians. We may ſay of the ſeveral members of this Divine Creature, as is ſaid of the complex body of Chriſtians, *If one ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it; if one be honoured, all rejoice* Jam. 1. 4.

with it. Therefore that you may experience the *delightfulneſs* of Religion, ſee that in the exerciſe and practice of it you be *entire, thorow Chriſtians.*

5. *Be confirmed in the apprehenſion, that Religion is in it ſelf a delightful thing, even univerſally and in the whole nature of it.* Whereby a double practical miſtake and error will be avoided, that greatly obſtructs and hinders the actual reliſh and ſenſation of that *delight.*

1. That either Religion is in the whole nature of it ſuch a thing to which *delight* muſt be alien, and baniſht from it: As if nothing did belong to, or could conſiſt with it, but ſowre ſeverities, penſiveneſs and ſad thoughts. Or elſe,

2. That if any *delight* did belong to it at all, it muſt be found only in peculiar extraordinary aſſurances and perſwaſions of Gods love; and be the attainment conſequently of none but more eminent Chriſtians.

That apprehenſion being throughly admitted, both theſe miſapprehenſions fall and vaniſh. And it will take place, if it be duly conſidered, *That there is a delight that will naturally ariſe from the congruity and fitneſs of actions in themſelves, and the facility of them, that they flow eaſily from their proper principles.* Whereupon there can be no true vital act of Religion but will be *delightful.* And we may appeal herein to the judgments of ſuch as ſhall allow themſelves to conſider, whether the matter do not evidently appear to be ſo upon

upon a ſerious review and revolving with themſelves of the ſeveral gracious operations that proceed from the holy rectitude mentioned in the former part; as the acts of even *Repentance*, *ſelf-abaſement*, *ſelf-denial*, *ſelf-devoting*, (appearing to be in themſelves moſt fit and becoming things), and readily without force proceeding (as they cannot but do) from a rectified and well-diſpoſed heart, how can they but be pleaſant? And it is much in our way to the experiencing of ſuch *delight*, to be at a point with our ſelves, and well-reſolved wherein it is to be ſought and found.

6. *However all the acts and operations of true, and living Religion be in themſelves delightful, yet apply your ſelves to the doing of them for an higher reaſon, and with a greater deſign than your own delight.* Otherwiſe you deſtroy your own work therein, and diſpoil your acts of their *ſubſtantial moral goodneſs*, and conſequently of their *delightfulneſs* alſo. That is not a morally good act, which is not *refer'd to God*, and done out of (at leaſt) an *habitual devotedneſs* to him, ſo as that he be the ſupream end thereof. You would therefore, by with-drawing and ſeparating their reference to God, raviſh from them their very life and ſoul; yea and perfectly nullifie thoſe of them that ſhould be *in themſelves* acts of Religion. So as that *in reſpect of all your actions*, that *ſeparation* were *unjuſt*; and *as to theſe* that ſhould be direct acts of Religion, *impoſſible*. Since therefore they are

only *delightful* as they are *vital acts, proceeding from a principle of Divine Life*; and that an *habitual devotedneſs to God*, is that very (comprehenſive and moſt radical) *principle*; you ſhould, by deſigning your own *delight* in them ſupreamly, counter-act your ſelf, and croſs your own end; you ſhould make them acts of Idolatry, not Religion; and ſet up your *own ſelf* as the Idol of Jealouſie, that receives the homage of them, inſtead of God: Whereby the unlawful pleaſure which you would engroſs to your ſelves, will turn all to gall and wormwood, and be bitterneſs in the end.

That therefore you may taſte the ſweetneſs and pleaſure which belongs to a religious godly life, your way muſt be, *to act on directly forward in the ſimplicity of your heart, doing all that you do to and for God.* And thus that pleaſure, becauſe it is natural to ſuch acts, will of its own accord reſult and ariſe to you; and ſo much the more, by how much leſs you deſign for your ſelf in what you do. From that uprightneſs and ſincerity of heart towards God it can never be ſeparated. But to be a Religious *Epicure*, to pray, hear, meditate, do acts of juſtice and charity, only to pleaſe and humour your ſelves, and that you may derive a kind of ſolace and ſatisfaction from your own work, is to undo your *deſign*, and blaſt the *Delight* which you covet. It follows while you ſeek it not; It flies from you while you ſo inordinately ſeek it.

7. Yet

7. *Yet diſallow not your ſelf to taſte and enjoy the pleaſure of well-doing: Yea, and (ſecondarily and in due ſubordination) to deſign and endeavour that you may do ſo.* It is in it ſelf, a *covetable and a lawful pleaſure*; ſo that it be not ſought and entertain'd out of its own place. It is a *promiſed pleaſure*, *The good man* (it is ſaid) *ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf*; And it is by particular direction to be teſtified to the *righteous*, *they ſhall eat the fruit of their own doings.* It's Gods gracious allowance to them, which it is a part of gratitude and dutifulneſs to eſteem and accept; yea, and with great admiration of the Divine Goodneſs, that hath made and ſetled ſuch a conjunction between their Duty and their *delight*; that hath laid ſuch Laws upon them, as in the keeping whereof there is ſuch reward; when-as they might have been enjoined a meaner ſervitude, and by the *condition* and *kind* of their work, have been kept ſtrangers to any thing of *delight* therein.

Pro. 14. 14.

Iſa. 3. 10.

Pſal. 19.

That thankful acknowledgment of the bounty and goodneſs of God to them in the very conſtitution of his Laws and Government, is become a *part of their duty*, which cannot be done without previous reliſhes of the ſweetneſs and goodneſs of their *other duty.* They are required *in every thing to give thanks:* And it is ſaid, they ſhall go on in their way as the *redeemed of the Lord, with everlaſting joy upon their heads*; That they ſhall *ſing in the ways of the Lord*; which cannot be, if they take not notice *that the ways of the Lord are pleaſantneſs, &*

1 Theſ. 5.

Iſa. 51.

Pſal. 138.

Prov. 3.

all his paths peace. Therefore you ſhould deſignedly ſet your ſelf to taſte the goodneſs and *delightfulneſs* of *holy walking.* And to that end, when you find the bleſſed cheriſhing warmth and vigour of Gods gracious communication let in upon you, inlarging your hearts, making your way and work eaſie to you, and helping you to do with an untoilſom facility, what he requires and calls for, and to *run the way of his Commandments*; ſo that you can do acts of piety, righteouſneſs and mercy *as natural acts*, born up by the power of a ſteady living Principle acting in you, (as it's ſaid, *They that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew ſtrength and mount up with wings as Eagles, run without wearineſs, and walk without fainting*); You ſhould now reflect and take notice how good and pleaſant is this! Make your pauſes and deliberate; have your ſeaſons of reſpiration and drawing breath; and then bethink your ſelf, commune thus with your own heart; How do I now like the way and ſervice of the Lord? and a life of pure devotedneſs to him? a courſe of regular walking in through ſubjection to his Laws and Government? and that the courſe of my actions be as a continual ſacrificing; *doing all to him, and for him?* what do you not now *rejoice that you find your ſelves to offer willingly?* Can you forbear with gratitude and joy to acknowledg and own it to him, that it is *of his own hand* that you do this? You ſhould now compare your preſent with your former ſtate and temper, and conſider how much bet-

Iſa. 40.

better is it to me to live in his *fear*, *love* and *communion*, than to be, as once I was, *alienated from the life of God*, and as *without him in the world! Now* I can *truſt* and *obey*, *once* I could not: *Now*, when the opportunity invites, I am in ſome readineſs to ſerve him, *created to good works*, *a veſſel fitted to my Maſters uſe*; *Some time* I was to every good work reprobate. Surely it is moſt becoming to take a free complacency in this bleſſed change; That is not with a proud Phariſaical gloriation to ſay, *God, I thank thee, I am not as other men*; or, *truſting in your ſelf that you are righteous, to deſpiſe others*; but with a mean eſtimation of your ſelf, and all you can do; and with that deep and conſtant ſenſe, that *when you have done all you can, you are an unprofitable ſervant, you do but your duty.* Yet bleſſing God that ſince he hath made ſuch things your duty, he alſo doth in ſome meaſure enable you to do it; That he hath reconciled and attemper'd your heart to your way and work, and made it pleaſant to you: Not hypocritically arrogating all to your ſelf, under the formal and falſe ſhew of thankſgiving to him; or aiming only more colourably to introduce a vain boaſt and oſtentation of your ſelf, in the form of gratulation to God; but as having an heart inwardly poſſeſt with the humble ſenſe who it is that hath *made you differ*, not only from other men, but from your ſelf alſo.

8. *And becauſe that diſpoſedneſs of heart unto ſuch a courſe of holy practice, may not be con-*

conſtantly actual, and equally ſenſible at all times (That all *delight* in the ways of God may not hereupon ceaſe, and be broken off, which in thoſe ſadder intervals cannot but ſuffer a great diminution); *You muſt take heed, that as to the diſtempers and indiſpoſitions you now diſcern in your own ſpirit, you do neither indulge your ſelf nor deſpair; But take the proper courſe of redreſs.*

To indulge your ſelf in them were mortal. Then down you go as a dead weight into the mire and dirt, into the depths of the earth, and your ſwift and pleaſant flight ends in an heavy lumpiſh fall. You ſhould therefore bethink your ſelf, That if you yield to a ſlothful ſluggiſh temper of ſpirit, which you now feel coming on upon you, ſhortly you ſhall have nothing (ſenſibly) remaining to you of your Religion, but the dead and empty form; How waſte and deſolate a thing will that be! A like thing as if you come into a deſerted houſe where you were wont pleaſantly to converſe with moſt *delectable* friends, and you now find nothing but cold bare walls. How diſmal will it be when only the ſame duties, the ſame external frame and acts of worſhip remain, but the ſpirit of life and power which was wont to breath in them, is retired and gone! And what, will you take up with that deluſive unconverſible ſhadow, or be content to embrace the ſtiff and breathleſs carcaſe that remains? You find perhaps your ſpirit ſinking into carnality, an earthly temper of mind gradually ſeizing on you; worldly thoughts, cares, deſires, fears, invading

vading your heart, by the ſame degrees that theſe come on, life retires; you grow liſtleſs toward God; your heart is not in your Religion as heretofore: You keep up your faſhion of praying, and doing other duties which were your former wont; but you languiſh in them: Can you here be content to lie ſtill and die? And rather chuſe to ſuffer the pains of *death* than of *labour*, by which your Soul might yet live? Is this a time to roll your ſelf upon your ſlothful bed, and ſay, *Soul, take thine eaſe*, even upon the pits brink? Do not agree the matter ſo. Think not of making a covenant with Death; It is not ſo gentle a thing as your ſlothful temper makes you think; Account the ſtate intolerable wherein you are ſo manifeſtly tending towards it. Think not well of your ſelf and your preſent caſe: What reaſon ſoever any have to be pleaſed and *delighted* with a courſe of lively converſe with God, and of walking in the Spirit; ſo much reaſon you have to be diſpleaſed with your ſelf as your caſe now is; To diſlike and abhor the preſent temper of your own Soul. If the life of Religion, and its vigorous exerciſes be *delightful*, by that very reaſon it appears its faint and ſickly languiſhings are not ſo.

Therefore know, that ſelf-indulgence is now moſt unſutable and dangerous. Labour to awaken in your ſelves ſome ſenſe of your condition. Think whither am I going? Repreſent to your own Soul the terrors of Death. Admit the impreſſion thereof. Behold its frightful viſage, and be ſtartled at it.

Re-

Recount with your ſelf what you ſhall be if God who is your life quite depart; If this ſhall never be, yet know that your fear leſt it ſhould is the means of your preſervation. And let the apprehenſion of the tendency of your diſtemper excite in you that juſt and ſeaſonable fear. How ſure ſoever you are of *the principle* that *God will never utterly forſake thoſe that are his* (as moſt certainly he never will); yet you cannot be ſo ſure of your application of it to your ſelf, as your caſe ſtands, but that there will now be room for this fear; Therefore let it be entertained.

But though you admit a juſt and very ſolicitous *Fear*, be ſure that you exclude not *Hope*: Though you apprehend your caſe dangerous, look not upon it as deſperate. Your hope muſt not be in your ſelf, but in him that raiſes the dead, and calleth things that are not, as though they were; yea, makes them exiſt and be. But if you caſt away all hope, you yield your ſelf to periſh. This ſtops your breath; ſo that even all ſtrugglings for life, and the very gaſpings of your fainting heart muſt immediately ceaſe, and end in perfect death. The *danger* of your caſe, as bad as it is, calls not for this; nor will the *exigeney* of it comport with it, when once the Soul ſays *there is no hope*, it immediately proceeds to
Jer. 2. 25. ſay, *I have loved ſtrangers and after them will I go.* Your Hope is as neceſſary to your ſafety
Rom. 8. 24. as your Fear; *we are ſaved by Hope*, i. e. *of the end it ſelf*, which therefore animates to all the encounters and difficulties of our way,

as

as well fromwithin as from without. Great diſtempers appear in you and often return; yea, ſuch as are of a threatning aſpect and tendency. You ſhould yet conſider you are under cure: The preſcribed means and method whereof are before you. There is Balm in *Gilead*, and a Phyſician there. One in whoſe hands none that truſted him ever miſcarried. 'Tis well if you find your ſelf ſick. The whole need him not, and will not therefore commit themſelves to his care. He hath relieved many ſuch as you, that *apprehending their caſe* have been reſtored to him; let them deſpair that know no ſuch way of help. Say within your ſelf, though I am faln and low, I ſhall riſe and ſtand, *renewed by thee, O my God.* Was there never ſuch a time with you before, when in the like caſe you cried to the Lord and he anſwered you, and *ſtrengthened you with ſtrength in your ſoul?* Pſal. 138. Say within your ſelf, *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul, hope thou in God; for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance* (where health ſhews it ſelf in lively, ſprightly, pleaſant looks) *and my God.* Pſal. 42. And this very hope as it preſerves life, ſo it doth the *delight* and pleaſure of life from being quite extinct. The joy of hope is not to go for nothing, when it can only be ſaid; not, *it is well, but, it ſhall be.* It is pleaſant to conſider that the ſtate wherein Saints on earth are, is a *ſtate of recovery*; That though it be not a ſtate of *perfect health*, yet it is not (alſo) a ſtate of death; but wherein they are tending to life in the perfection of it.

And

And their frequent (and very faulty) relapſes ſhall be found but to magnifie the more the skill and patience of their great Phyſician. Therefore however you are not hence to be ſecure, or impoſing upon him; yet let not your hearts ſink into an abject deſpair and ſullen diſcontent, that you find a diſtempered frame ſometimes returning. Let there be tender relentings after God. Your heart ought often to ſmite you, that you have been no more careful and watchful; but not admit a thought, that you will therefore caſt off all; that it's in vain ever to ſtrive more, or ſeek to recover that good frame that you have often found is ſo ſoon gone.

Inſtead of that apply your ſelf with ſo much the more earneſtneſs to the proper courſe of remedy; and therein you muſt know your own labour and diligence; your contentions with your ſelf muſt have a great place: Otherwiſe it would never have been ſaid, *Be watchful and ſtrengthen the things that remain that are ready to die. And give all diligence to add to your faith vertue*, &c. Such things would never have been charg'd as duty upon you if you had nothing to do. You muſt expect to be dealt with as a ſort of creatures capable of underſtanding your own concernments; not to be hewed and hammered as ſenſeleſs ſtones that are ignorant of the artiſts intent, but as living ones to be poliſhed and fitted to the ſpiritual building, by an hand that reaſonably expects your own compliance and co-operation to its *known* deſign,

Rev. 3.

2 Pet. 1.

ſign. Unto which deſign though you muſt know you are to be *ſubſervient* and muſt do ſomething; yet you muſt withal conſider you can be *but ſubſervient*, and of your ſelves alone can do juſt nothing.

Therefore, if ever you would know what a *life of ſpiritual delight* means, *you muſt conſtantly ſtrive againſt all your ſpiritual diſtempers that obſtruct it* [*in the power of the Holy Ghoſt*].

And do not think that is enjoining you a courſe wholly out of *your power*; for though it be true, that the power of the Holy Ghoſt is not *naturally yours*, or at your diſpoſe; yet by *gracious vouchſafement* and *ordination it is*: If it were not ſo, what means that exhortation, *Be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; and that, *If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit*; with the foregoing preſcription of *Walking in the Spirit, that we might not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh.* Doth the Holy Ghoſt himſelf preſcribe to us impertinently, in order to our obtaining of his own imparted influences? Doth not He know the method and way wherein they are to be conveyed? Or would he deceive us by miſrepreſenting it? In ſhort, *Walking in the Spirit* muſt ſignifie ſomething; and what can it ſignifie leſs than *dependence* on its power, and *ſubjection* thereto, with the *continuance* of both theſe? Theſe therefore are neceſſary to the making of that *power* our own:

Eph. 6. 10.

Gal. 5. 25.

v. 16.

1. *Dependence* and *truſt*; as that like phraſe imports, *I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord God*,

Pſal. 71. 16

Zech. 10. 12. *God, &c.* And that, *I will ſtrengthen them in the Lord, and they ſhall walk up and down in his name*, at once ſhews us both the communication of the Divine Power [*I will ſtrengthen them in the Lord*], and the way wherein it is communicated, [*their walking up and down in his name*], *viz.* in actual and continued dependence thereon. The bleſſed God hath ſetled this connexion between our Faith and his own exerted Power. As the extraordinary works of the Spirit were not done, but upon the exerciſe of the extraordinary Faith, which by the Divine conſtitution was requiſite thereunto: So that the Infidelity which ſtood in the privation of this Faith, did ſometimes (ſo inviolable had that conſtitution made that connexion) in a ſort bind Mark 6. 5, 6. up the Power of God, (*And he could do no mighty works there,---And he marvelled becauſe* Mat. 17. 19, 20. *of their unbelief.----Why could not we caſt him out?---Becauſe of your unbelief*). Nor alſo are the works of the Holy Ghoſt, that are common upon all ſincere Chriſtians, done, but upon the intervening exerciſe of that Eph. 6. 16. *more-common Faith.* Therefore is this *Shield* to be taken *above all* the other parts of the Divine Armature, as ſufficient to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; therefore are 1 Pet. 1. we ſaid to be kept *by the Power of God through Faith.*---And more expreſly *in terms* to our Gal. 3. 14. preſent purpoſe; *We are to receive the promiſe of the Spirit* (*i.e.* the Spirit promiſed) *through Faith.* Hereby we draw the Power of that Almighty Spirit into a conſent and co-operation

ration with our ſpirit. So the great God ſuffers Himſelf, his own Arm and Power to be taken hold of by us. He is ingaged when he is truſted; that *truſt* being now in this caſe, not a raſh and unwarrantable preſuming upon him, but ſuch whereto he hath given the invitation and encouragement himſelf. So that when we reflect upon the Promiſes wherein the gift of the Spirit is conveyed, or wherein the expreſs grant there of is folded up, we may ſay, *Remember thy word to thy ſervant, wherein thou haſt cauſed me to hope.*

Prov. 1. 23. Ezek. 36: 27. *with many the like.* Pſal. 119.

And then ſurely he will not fruſtrate the expectation which he hath himſelf been the Author of. He would never have induced thoſe to truſt in him, whom he intended to diſappoint. That free Spirit which (as the Wind blows where it liſteth) now permits it ſelf to be brought under bonds, even the bonds of Gods own Covenant, whereof we now take hold by our faith; ſo that he will not fail to give forth his influence, ſo far as ſhall be neceſſary for the maintaining a reſolution in us of ſtedfaſt adherence to God and his ſervice, and retaining a dominion over undue inclinations and affections.

How expreſs and peremptory are thoſe words, *This I ſay*, (q. d.) (I know what I ſay, I have well weigh'd the matter, and ſpeak not at random) *Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh!* And ſo much as this affords great matter of rational *delight*, though more ſenſible tranſports (which are not ſo needful to us, and in refe-

rence whereto the Spirit therefore retains its liberty) be not ſo frequent. Therefore if we aim at the having our ſpirits placed and ſetled in the ſecret of the Divine Preſence, entertain'd with the *delights* of it; If we would *know* and have the ſenſible proof of that Religion which is all life and power, and conſequently *ſweetneſs and pleaſure*; our direct way is believing on the Spirit: That very
Pſal. 147. 11. *Truſt* is his *delight*, *He taketh pleaſure in them that hope in his mercy.* It is that whereby we give him Divine Honour, the homage and acknowledgment proper to a Deity; confeſſing our ſelves impotent and *inſufficient to think*
2 Cor. 3. *any thing as of our ſelves*, we rely upon his ſuſtaining hand, and own our *ſufficiency to be of him.* It is his *delight* to be depended on as a Father by his children. He is pleaſed that Title
Heb. 12. ſhould be given him *The Father of Spirits.* To have the Spirits which are his off-ſpring gathering about him (eſpecially thoſe who being revolted from him and become ſenſible of their miſery by their revolt, do now *upon his invitation* apply themſelves, and ſay, *Lo, now we come to thee, thou art the Lord our God*), craving his renewed communications, drawing vital influences from him, and the breath of life, adoring his boundleſs fulneſs that filleth all in all. And when we thus give him his *delight*, we ſhall not long want ours. But then we muſt alſo add,

2. *Subjection* to our *dependence*; a willing obedient ſurrender and reſignation of our ſelves to the conduct and guidance of that bleſſed

bleſſed Spirit. A dutiful yielding to his dictates, ſo as that they have actually with us the governing binding force and power of a Law (*The Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt as it is called* *) Great care muſt be taken of *grieving* and *quenching* the Spirit, *of rebelling* and *vexing it*, *of reſiſting it*, and *of ſtriving againſt it* (which appears to have been the horrid crime of the old world: His Spirit it is intimated had ſtriven when it is ſaid it ſhould *no longer ſtrive*; And that it had ſtriven, implies a counter-ſtriving that was now, by his penal retirement permitted to be victorious, but to their own ſudden ruine) *of deſpiting the Spirit of grace.* A wickedneſs aggravated by the very ſtyle and title there given it, the *Spirit of Grace*; and unto which only ſuch a vengeance (as it is intimated in what follows) which it peculiarly belong'd to God himſelf to inflict could be proportionable. When we permit our ſelves entirely to the government of the Holy Ghoſt, thereby to have our ſpirits and ways framed and directed according to his own Rules, His quickening influence, and the pleaſure and ſweet reliſhes thereof will not be withheld.

* Rom. 8. 2
Eph. 4.
1 Theſ. 5.
Iſa. 63.
Acts 7.
Gen. 6.
Heb. 10. 29

And if the experience of ſome Chriſtians ſeem not conſtantly to anſwer this, who complain they pray often for the Spirit, and deſire earneſtly its gracious communications, but find little of them, They are concerned ſeriouſly to reflect, and bethink themſelves whether their *diſtruſt* or *diſobedience*, or both,

have not made them deſolate. Surely we are altogether faulty in this matter, his promiſe and faithfulneſs do not fail, his Spirit is not ſtraitned; But we either do not entirely *commit* and *entruſt* our ſelves to his guidance, or we obediently comply not with it; but either *indulge our ſluggiſhneſs* and *neglect*, or *our contrary inclinations*, and *reſiſt* his dictates, are intractable and wayward, not apt *to be led by the Spirit*, and hence provoke him to withdraw from us. Hereto we are in juſtice to impute it that we find ſo little of that power moving in us, all the motions whereof are accompanied with ſo much *delight*.

2. For *Excitation*. Little one would think ſhould be needful to be ſaid more than only that we would bethink our ſelves what all this while we have been directed to and are by this Text. If that be once underſtood, Hath it not *in it ſelf* invitation enough? Do we need further to be invited to a *Life of delight?* Do we need to be preſt with arguments to chuſe *delightful* and wholeſom food, rather than gall and wormwood, or even very poyſon? It is a ſad argument of the deplorate ſtate of man that he ſhould need arguments in ſuch a caſe! But becauſe (moreover) much is to be ſaid hereafter, to perſwade unto *delighting in God* conſidered in the *ſtricter notion of it*, and that will alſo be applicable to this purpoſe; therefore little is intended to be ſaid here.

Only it is to be conſidered, Do you intend to

to proceed in any courſe of Religion, or no? If not, you are to be remitted to ſuch Diſcourſes as prove to you the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of it: Which if you think nothing you meet with ſufficiently proves, Think with your ſelf how well you can prove, that there is no God, and that you are no Man, but a periſhing Beaſt. For theſe things they are concerned *not fondly to preſume and wiſh*, but moſt clearly and ſurely to demonſtrate, who will be of no Religion.

But if you think that horrid, and reſolve to own ſomething or other of Religion; Will you here uſe your underſtanding, and conſider? Is it indeed ſo horrid a thing to diſavow all Religion? And what is it better to pretend to it to no purpoſe? You find the Religion is all but ſhew and ſhadow, meer empty vanity and mockery, which is not *delightful*. If you will not chuſe a better, *becauſe it is delightful*, (as you are not adviſed to do for *that* as your *chief reaſon*), yet at leaſt chuſe *that which is ſo*, becauſe it is in other more conſiderable reſpects eligible, as being moſt honourable and pleaſing to Him that made you, and only ſafe and profitable to your ſelf. And what ſhall your Religion ſerve for, that will not anſwer theſe purpoſes?

And if you be not *aſhamed* to ſpend ſo conſiderable a part of the time of your life, as the exerciſes of your Religion will take up, in doing that (as was ſaid before) whereof you can give no account: Yet me-thinks you

ſhould be *afraid* to make ſuch things the ſubject of your vanity, as do relate to God, either *really* or in *your opinion.* Can you find nothing wherein vainly to trifle, but the ſacred things of the Great God of Heaven, and the eternal concernments of your own Soul? And ſhall the time ſpent about theſe matters be peculiarly *markt out* as your idle time, wherein you ſhall be doing that only which ſhall wholly go for loſs and ſignifie nothing? The Religion which is not *delightful* can turn to no better account.

If therefore you will have a Religion, and you have *any reaſon* for that reſolution, by the *ſame reaſon* you would have *any*, you muſt have the *pleaſant delightful Religion* we ſpeak of. You have no other choice. There is no other will ſerve your turn. And therefore what hath been ſaid to divert you from the other, ought to perſwade you to the choice of this.

And beſides, ſince there is ſo much of *ſecret delight* in true ſubſtantial Religion, that ought not to ſignifie nothing with you; If we did conſider the *delightfulneſs* of it *alone*, upon that *ſingle account*, it ſurely challenges the preference, before that which is neither *profitable* nor *delightful.*

And that it is in it ſelf ſo *delightful*, if you had nothing to inform you but the report of ſuch as profeſs to have tried and found it ſo, methinks that at leaſt ſhould provoke you to *try* alſo. How ſluggiſh a temper doth it argue, not to be deſirous to know the utmoſt

ntmoſt that is in it! It were even a laudable curioſity to reſolve upon making trial; to get into the inmoſt center of it; to pierce and preſs onward till you reach the ſeat of life, till you have got the ſecret, and the very heart of Religion and your heart do meet and join in one. Did you never try experiments for your pleaſure? Try this one. See what you will find in withdrawing your ſelf from all things elſe, and becoming entirely devoted to God through the Redeemer, to live *after his will*, and *in his preſence*. Try the difference between viewing Truths to pleaſe your *genius*, or uſing Divine Ordinances to keep up the cuſtom, to conform your ſelf to thoſe you live among, and help to make a ſolemn ſhew; And doing theſe things with a ſerious deſign to get into an acquaintance with God, to have your Soul transformed into his Image, that you may have preſent and eternal fellowſhip with him. Try how much better it is, to have your lives governed by an awful and dutiful reſpect to God, than to follow your own wild and enormous inclinations: And whether it be not better, what good things ſoever you do, to do it for the Lords ſake, than from baſe and ſordid motives.

And why ſhould you be of ſo *mean* and *abject* a *Spirit*, as to content your ſelf to be held at the door and in the outer Courts of Religion; when others enter in and taſte the rich proviſions of Gods houſe? Why will you *diſtinguiſh* your ſelves by ſo *debaſing* a

character? 'Tis a juſt and commendable ambition, to be as forward here as the beſt. Why will you ſuffer *this* and *that* and the *other man* to enter into the Kingdom of God before you; even that Kingdom *which conſiſts in righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt!*

Think not ſo meanly of your ſelf; impoſe not on your ſelf that needleſs unwarrantable modeſty, as to account you are of a lower rank than all that ever became intimately acquainted with the hidden *delights* of a godly life; At leaſt you are as capable of being *thought worthy* as any, for *his ſake* upon whoſe account all muſt be accepted: Therefore think with your ſelves, *Why ſhould I not labour to attain as far in the matter of Religion, as this or that Neighbour of mine? What ſhould hinder? Who reſtrains or forbids me?*

But you cannot, if you conſider, but have ſomewhat more to aſſure you of the *delightfulneſs* of it, than the meer report of others; For your own Reaſon and Conſcience cannot but ſo pronounce, if you go to the particulars that have been inſtanc't in. If you acknowledg a God, and conſider your ſelf as a reaſonable Creature made by him, and depending on him; you cannot but ſee, it is congruous and fit your ſpirit ſhould be ſo framed and affected towards Him, towards your fellow-creatures of your own order, and all things elſe that do and ſhall circumſtantiate your preſent and future ſtate, as hath been in ſome meaſure (though very defectively

fectively) repreſented; And that it muſt needs be very pleaſant, if it were ſo. You can frame in your mind an *Idea* of a life tranſacted according to ſuch rectified inclinations; And when you have done ſo, do but ſolemnly appeal to your own judgment, whether that were not a very delectable life? And thereupon bethink your ſelf, what your caſe is, if you cannot actually reliſh a pleaſure in what your own judgment tells you is ſo highly pleaſurable. Methinks you ſhould reflect thus, *What a monſtrous creature am I, that confeſs that delightful wherein yet I can take no delight! How perverſe a nature have I! Surely things are much out of order with me; I am not what I ſhould be!* And one would think, it ſhould be uneaſie to you to be as *you are*; and that your ſpirit ſhould be reſtleſs till you find your temper rectified, and that you are in this reſpect become what you *ſhould be.*

And will you dream and ſlumber all your days? How much time have you loſt, that might have been pleaſantly ſpent in a courſe of godlineſs! Do you not aim at a life of eternal *delights* with God? If you now begin not to *live to God*, when will you? That life which you reckon ſhall never end with you, muſt yet have a beginning. Will you defer till you dye your beginning to live? Have you any hope God will deal in a peculiar way with you from all men, and make the other world the place of your firſt heart-change? How diſmal ſhould it be to you, to look in and ſtill find

find your heart dead towards God, and the things of God; ſo that you have no *delight* in them. Think what the beginnings of the Divine life, and the preſent *delights* of it, muſt be the earneſt of to you, and make ſure the ground (*betime*) of ſo great an hope.

II. BUT I forbear here to inſiſt further; and paſs on to the Diſcourſe of *Delighting in God*, under the other more ſtrict notion of it, *viz. As the very act of delight hath its direct exerciſe upon himſelf.* So we are to conſider this *delight*, not as a thing ſome way adherent to all other duties of Religion; but as a diſtinct Duty of it ſelf, that requires a *ſolemn* and *direct* application of our ſelves thereunto. For though it ſeems little to be doubted, but there is in this Precept a *part* of Religion put for the *whole* (as having a real influence, and conferring with its name a grateful ſavour and tincture upon the whole); it would yet be very unreaſonable, not to take *ſpecial* notice of *that part* from whence the *intire frame* of Religion hath its name.

And having ſhewn the *nature* of this Duty already in the *former part*, what is now to be ſaid, muſt more directly concern the *practice* of it; And will (as the caſe requires) fall into two kinds of Diſcourſe, *viz.*

Expoſtulation

{ *Expoſtulation* concerning the omiſſion and diſuſe of ſuch Practice,
And
Invitation thereunto.

And in both theſe kinds it is requiſite we apply our ſelves to two ſorts of Perſons, *viz.*

Such whoſe ſpirits are wholly averſe and alien to it. And
Such as, though not altogether unpractis'd, are very defective in it, and neglect it too much.

1. Both ſorts are to be *expoſtulated* with; and no doubt, the great God hath a juſt quarrel with mankind (whom theſe two ſorts do comprehend) upon the one or the other of theſe accounts; wherein it is fit we ſhould plead with men for his ſake and their own. And,

1. *With the former ſort*; Them who are altogether diſaffected to God, *alienated and enemies in their minds through wicked works*, and (excepting ſuch as deny his being, with whom we ſhall not here concern our ſelves) at the utmoſt diſtance from *delighting in him.* And as to ſuch, our Expoſtulation ſhould aim at their conviction, both of

The matter of *fact*, That thus the caſe is with them. And of
The great *iniquity* and *evil* of it.

First,

First, It is needful we endeavour to faſten upon ſuch a conviction, That this is the ſtate of their caſe. For while his being is not flatly deny'd, men think it generally creditable, to be *profeſſed Lovers of God*; and reckon it ſo odious a thing *not to be ſo*, that they who are even moſt deeply guilty, are not eaſily brought to confeſs *enmity* to him; but *flatter themſelves in their own eyes, till their iniquity be found to be hateful.* The difficulty of making ſuch apprehend themſelves diſeaſed, that their minds are under the power of this dreadful diſtemper, that it is not well with ſpirits in this reſpect, is the great obſtruction to their cure.

But I ſuppoſe you to whom I now apply my ſelf, to acknowledg the Bible to be Gods Word, and that you profeſs reverence to the Truth and Authority of that Word, and will yeild to be tried by it.

1. Therefore *firſt*, you muſt be ſuppoſed ſuch as believe the account true, which that book gives of the common ſtate of man; That it is a ſtate of Apoſtacy from God; That *the*
Pſal. 14. *Lord looking down from heaven upon the children of men, to ſee if any did underſtand and ſeek God, finds they are all gone aſide, i. e.* (that the return may anſwer to the meaning of the inquiry), *gone off from him. Every one of them is gone back*, (or *revolted*, as
Pſal. 53. it is expreſſed in the parallel Pſalm), *There*
Rom. 3. *is none that doth good, no not one*; which is quoted by the Apoſtle to the intent, *That ev-*
v. 19. *ry mouth may be ſtopped, and the whole world*

may

may become guilty before God. This is then a common caſe; And as the ſame Apoſtle charges it upon the *Gentiles*, that they were *haters of God*; ſo doth our Saviour as expreſly on the *Jews*, (who no doubt thought themſelves as innocent of this crime as you), *That they had both ſeen and hated both Him and his Father.* And when it is ſaid of men, that *they were by nature the children of wrath*, (they to whom he writes *even as others*), do you think that is ſpoken of any *lovers of God*, as their preſent ſtate? Or that when all *by nature are children of wrath*, any are *by nature lovers of him*, ſo as to *love* him and be under his *wrath* both at once? It is likely then, that againſt ſo plain evidence, while you confeſs your ſelves men, you will not deny you were ſometime *haters of God.* Well then, is the caſe altered with you? It is a conviction againſt you, *that you are of humane race*, till it can be evidenc't you are *born from above*, and are become *new creatures*? And what, do you find this? It is not expected, you ſhould be able to tell the very moment when you ceas'd from your enmity againſt God, and became his friends; or give a punctual account of every turn or motion of thoughts in ſuch a change: But it is to be ſuppoſed, the work was not done upon you in your ſleep, ſo as that you could have no animadverſion of what was doing. However, comparing what you ſometime were with what you are, what difference do you obſerve? What were you, ſometimes *haters of God*, and are you now

Rom. 1. 30.

come

come to *love* and *delight in him*, without perceiving in your ſelves any difference? Bethink your ſelves, is not the temper of your ſpirits juſt ſuch Godward as it was always wont to be, without any remarkable turn or alteration? That is a ſhrewd preſumption againſt you, that your caſe is moſt deplorable. But,

2. What is your preſent temper, in it ſelf conſidered? You do *love God* and *delight in him*, How do you make it appear? wherein doth that friendly and dutiful affection towards him evidence it ſelf? Sure *love* and *hatred* are not all one with you. Whereby would you diſcern your *hatred* towards one you did moſt flatly and peremptorily diſaffect? You would *diſlike the thoughts of him*, hate his memory, caſt him out of your thoughts: Do you not the ſame way ſhew your diſaffection to God? Do you not find, that ſo a wicked man (his enemy) is brand-
Pſal. 10. 4. ed and diſtinguiſht, *God is not in all his thoughts*? Are not they who ſhall be turned into Hell
Pſal. 9. 17. deſcribed thus, *The people that forget God*; that is, who *willingly* and *of choice* forget him, or from the habitual inclination of their hearts? And is not that your caſe? What could hinder you to remember him, if you were ſo diſpoſed?

Yea, But you often forget your friends, or thoſe at leaſt to whom you are ſure you bear no ill will; and what friend would expect to be always in your thoughts? It's anſwered, But you *diſreliſh* not the remembrance of a Friend; Do you not

not the thoughts of God? You do not think on your abſent Friends while no preſent occaſion occurs, to bring them to your remembrance: But is God abſent? Is he far from any one of us? Or have you not daily before your eyes, things enough to bring him to mind; while his glorious works ſurround you, and you live, move, and have your being in him, and your breath is in his hand? Have you that dependence on any Friend? Are you under ſo much obligation to any? You often do not think on Friends with whom you have no opportunity to converſe; Have you no opportunity to converſe with Him? Your Friends can lay no ſuch Law upon you, to have them much in your thoughts. It argues a *depraved inclination*, not to do herein what you *ought* and are *bound* to do. You cannot by the exerciſe of your thoughts obtain the preſence of a Friend; you might a moſt comfortable Divine preſence.

And what though you think not of many to whom you bear no ill will, nor have any converſe with many ſuch; Is it enough to bear no ill will to God? Will that ſuffice you to *delighting* in him? Are you no more concerned to mind God and converſe with him, than with the man you never knew, or had to do with? Your unconverſableneſs with God, and unmindfulneſs of him, can proceed from nothing but ill will, who daily offers himſelf to your converſe, who ſeeks and invites your acquaintaince, would have you inwardly know him, and lead your lives with him,

Why

Why is it that you do not ſo, but that you *like not to retain him in your knowledg?* And that this is the ſenſe and language of your hearts towards him, *Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledg of thy ways*; It can proceed from nothing but *ill will* and a *diſagreeable temper*, that you ſhun the converſe of one that ſeeks yours; that you will take no notice of one that often offers himſelf to your view, one that meets you at every turn, and aims to draw your eye, and cannot gain a look. When this is your deportment towards God, that he paſſes by you and you perceive him not; he compaſſes you about behind and before and is acquainted with all your ways, and with him and his ways you will have no acquaintance, remain *alienated from the life of God, and as without him in the world*; Is not this downright enmity? Or can this deportment agree with *habitual* and the frequent *actual delight in God* which is requir'd?

Again, Would you not be juſtly taken to diſaffect one whoſe *temper* is ungrateful, whoſe *diſpoſition* and *way* is unpleaſing to you? Is it not thus with you Godward? When you hear of the purity and holineſs of his Nature, his abhorrency of all wickedneſs, and how deteſtable to him every thing is that is impure, and that he will not endure it; Do not your hearts regret this quality (as we muſt conceive of it) in the Nature of God? Which yet, becauſe it is his very Nature, doth ſo much the more certainly infer,

infer, that a *diſlike* of it cannot but include *diſaffection* to *himſelf*, and *that* habitual and conſtant, ſince his whole way of dealing with men, and the courſe of his government over the world, do (and ſhall more diſcernibly) favour of it; Do they not wiſh him hereupon *not to be*, in this reſpect, *what he is*; which is in effect, to wiſh him *not to be at all*? The ſame thing which the heart of the Fool ſays, *No God*; *i.e.* This would pleaſe ſuch a one *to the very heart*. And doth this import no enmity? Can this ſtand with *delight in him?*

Are you not diſaffected to *him*, whom not being able to accuſe of falſhood, whom having the greateſt imaginable aſſurances of the impoſſibility he ſhould *deceive*, you will yet by no means be induced to *truſt*? Conſider, What doth your *truſt in God* ſignifie, more than the ſound of the Name? Doth it *quiet* your heart, in reference to any affairs you pretend to commit to him? Doth it purifie it, and check your ill inclinations, in any thing wherein they ſhould be countermanded upon the credit of his Word? What doth his Teſtimony concerning the future things you have not ſeen, weigh with you, to the altering of your courſe, and rendering it ſuch as may comport and ſquare with the belief of ſuch things? Would not the word of an ordinary man, premoniſhing you of any advantage or danger which you have no other knowledg of, be of more value with you? Conſtant ſuſpicion of any one, without cauſe

or pretence, moſt certainly argues radicated enmity. You *love* him not whom you cannot *truſt*.

Do you *love* him whom upon all occaſions you moſt cauſleſly diſpleaſe; whoſe offence you reckon nothing of? Is that ingenuous towards a Friend, or dutiful towards a Father or a Lord? How do you, in *this*, carry towards the bleſſed God? Are you wont to diſpleaſe your ſelves to pleaſe him, or croſs your own will to do his? Do you take delight in him whom you make no difficulty to vex; whoſe known declared pleaſure, though you confeſs him greater, wiſer, and more righteous than your ſelf, you have no more regard to, wherein it croſſes your own inclination, than you would have to that of your Child, your Slave, or a Fool?

Have you any thing to except againſt that meaſure and character of loyal affection to your Redeemer and Lord, *If ye love me, keep my commandments; Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you; This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments?* Do you not diſobey the known will of God in your ordinary practice without regret? Do not you know it to be his will, That you *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*; That you *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of Heaven*; That you *keep your heart with all diligence*; That you *deny your ſelf, crucifie the fleſh*, be temperate, juſt, merciful, patient? Do you aim at obeying him in theſe things? Can you ſay, Lord, for thy ſake I refrain the things to which my heart

heart inclines? Hath his prohibition any reſtraining force upon your hearts? Do you not allow your ſelf to be licentious, earthly, vain, proud, wrathful, revengeful, though you know it will offend him? And is this your *love* to him, or *delight* in him?

Do you bear goodwill to him whoſe reproach and diſhonour you are not concern'd for, yea, whom you ſtick not to diſhonour and reproach? *whoſe intereſt among men* hath no place in your thoughts, whoſe friends are none of yours, whoſe enemies are your friends, whoſe favour you care not for, nor regret his frowns, whoſe Worſhip is a burthen to you, (that you had rather do any thing than pray to him), and his fellowſhip an undeſired thing? Make an eſtimate by theſe things of the temper of your hearts towards God; and conſider whether it beſpeak *delight* in him, or not rather habitual averſion and enmity.

It may be you will admit theſe things ſeem to carry ſomewhat of conviction with them: But they concern many that are taken for godly perſons and lovers of God, as well as they do you. And it may be many ſuch may take themſelves for godly perſons and lovers of God, and be miſtaken as well as you; And what will that mend your cauſe? If theſe things will prove a perſon one that hath no delight in God, they equally prove it as to you and others, which will make nothing to your advantage.

But if they who have *ſincere love* to God,

are in a degree peccant againſt the Laws of ſuch love (as that they are, they will hear in due time), They are more ready to accuſe themſelves than other men; They *abhor* themſelves, that they do not more entirely delight in God, and repent in duſt and aſhes: It better becomes you, to imitate their repentance, than glory in their ſinful weakneſs; which while they patronize not themſelves, you ſhould not think it can afford a valuable patronage unto you. When did you check and contend with your own hearts upon theſe accounts, as *they* are wont to do? And if theſe things, in a degree found with them, prove their *delight in God imperfect*, their prevailing contraries will prove it (however) *ſincere*. And if you will not now underſtand the difference, God grant you may not hereafter at a more coſtly rate, between the *imperfection* and the *total want* of his love; between having your heart and Soul *imperfectly* alive towards God and *perfectly* dead.

You may further ſay, God is out of your ſight, and therefore how can it be expected you ſhould find a ſenſible delight in him?

But is he out of the ſight of your minds? If he be, what would you infer, That then you cannot delight in him at all, and therefore that you do not; the thing that you are charg'd with all this while. But he is out of ſight *by the high excellency of his Being*; for which *reaſon* he ſhould be delighted in the more, *i. e.* with a *deeper delight*, though not like

like that you take in the things of ſenſe: And he hath been ſo beyond all things, notwithſtanding his abode in that light which is inacceſſible. This therefore is confeſſion without excuſe; and would never be offered as an excuſe by any, but thoſe that are loſt in fleſh and ſenſe, have forgot they have reaſonable Souls, and had rather be numbred with Brutes than Men; As if there were not many things you have not ſeen with the eyes of fleſh, more excellent than thoſe you have! Or as if you had no other faculty than eyes of fleſh to ſee with! Which ſince you have, and the depravation thereof is vicious and ſinful, as your *not-delighting in God* (the matter of fact) ſeems to be yeilded, and ſo you quit your firſt Poſt; It will *thence* appear, that it cannot but be *ſinful* too. And ſince at *that* you ſeem to make a ſtand (as at your next Poſt), either thinking to deny or extenuate the *evil* of it, our Expoſtulation muſt follow you thither, and be aimed,

2. To evince to you the *greatneſs* and *horridneſs* of that ſin. Suffer your ſelves therefore to be reaſoned with to this purpoſe, and conſider,

Firſt, That you have ſomewhat of *delectation* in your Natures, *i. e.* you have the *power* naturally inherent in you, of *taking delight* in one thing or other. You have ſuch a thing as *love* about you. Are not ſome things grateful and agreeable to you, in which you can and do take complacency? Therefore herein an act is not enjoined you which is incom-

petent to your Natures, or ſimply impoſſible to you.

Next then, Do you not know, your *delight* or *love* ought to be placed on ſome *good* or other that is known to you; and among things that you know to be good, proportionably to the goodneſs which you find in them, and ſupreamly on the beſt?

Further, Do you not acknowledg the bleſſed God to be the beſt and moſt excellent Good? as being the firſt and fountain-Good, the fulleſt and moſt comprehenſive, the pureſt and altogether unmixed, the moſt immutable and permanent Good? How plain and certain is this? How manifeſtly impoſſible is it, if there were not ſuch a Good, that otherwiſe any thing elſe ſhould ever have been *good*, or been at all? Is not this as ſure and evident as any thing your ſenſes could inform you of? Whence is the glorious excellency of this great Creation, the beauty, lovelineſs, pleaſantneſs of any Creature? Muſt not all that, and infinitely more, be originally in the great Creator of all. This, if you conſider, you cannot but ſee and own.

While then your own hearts tell you, you *delight* not in God, Do not your Conſciences begin to accuſe and judg you, that you deal not righteouſly in this matter? And ought it not to fill your Souls with horror, when you conſider, you take no *delight* in the beſt and ſovereign Good? Yea, when you look into your diſaffected hearts and find, that you not only *do not delight in God*, but you *cannot*?

not; and not for the want of the natural power, but a right inclination? Should you not with aſtoniſhment bethink your ſelves, every one for himſelf, what is this that's befal'n me; I am convinced, this is the beſt Good, every way moſt worthy of my higheſt *delight* and *love*, and yet my heart ſavours it not! You can have no pretence to ſay, *That becauſe your heart is disinclin'd, therefore you are excuſed, for you only do not what through an invincible disinclination you apprehend you cannot do.* But you ſhould bethink your ſelf, *What a wretch am I, that am ſo ill-inclin'd?* For is not any one more wicked according as he is more ſtrongly inclin'd to wickedneſs and averſe to what is good? But how vincible or invincible your disinclination is, you do not yet know, not having yet made due trial. That you cannot of your ſelves overcome, it is out of queſtion: But have you tried what help might be got from Heaven, in the uſe of Gods own preſcribed means? If that courſe bring you in no help, then may you underſtand how much you have provoked the Lord. For though he have promiſed, that for ſuch as turn at his reproof, he will *pour out his Spirit to them*; yet they *who when* Prov. 1. *he calls refuſe*, and *when he ſtretches out his hand regard not, but ſet at naught all his counſel, &c.* may *call and not be anſwered*, may *ſeek him early and not find him.* And *that wickedneſs* may ſomewhat be eſtimated by *this effect*, that thus it makes the Spirit of Grace retire, that free, benign, merciful Spirit, the Author

of all love, ſweetneſs and goodneſs, become to a forlorn ſoul a reſolved ſtranger. If you are ſo given up, you have firſt given up your ſelves; You have wilfully caſt him out of your thoughts, and hardened your own hearts againſt him, who was the Spring of your Life and Being, and in whom is all your Hope: And whether this malignity of your hearts ſhall ever finally be overcome or no (as you have no cauſe to deſpair but it may be overcome, if apprehending your life to lie upon it, you wait and ſtrive, and pray and cry, as your caſe requires); Yet do you not ſee it to be a fearful pitch of malignity? and ſo much the worſe and more vicious by how much it is more hardly overcome?

That we may here be a little more particular: Conſider,

1. *How tumultuous and diſorderly a thing this your diſaffection is?* You are here to conſider its *direct tendency*, its natural aptitude or what it doth of it ſelf, and in its own nature lead and tend to. If *you* may withdraw your *delight* and *love* from God, then ſo may all *other men* as well: Therefore now view the *thing it ſelf* in the common nature of it; And ſo, Is not averſion to *delight in God* a manifeſt contrariety to the *order of things?* A turning all upſide down? A ſhattering and breaking aſunder the bond between *rational appetite* and the *Firſt Good?* A disjointing and unhinging of the beſt and nobleſt part of Gods Creation from its ſtation and reſt, its proper *baſis* and center? How fearful a rupture doth it make!

How

How violent and deſtructive a diſlocation! If you could break in pieces the orderly contexture of the whole univerſe within it ſelf, reduce the frame of nature to utmoſt confuſion, rout all the ranks and orders of creatures, tear aſunder the Heavens, and diſſolve the compacted body of the earth, mingle Heaven and Earth together, and reſolve the World into a meer heap; you had not done ſo great a ſpoil, as in breaking the *primary* and *ſupream tie* and bond between the *Creature* and his *Maker*; Yea, between the Creator of all things and his more noble and excellent Creature. All the relations, aptitudes and inclinations of the Creatures to one another, are but *inferior* and *ſubordinate* to thoſe between the Creatures and their common Author and Lord: And here the corruption of the beſt cannot but be worſt of all. Again,

2. *What an unnatural wickedneſs is it!* To hate thy own original! To diſaffect the moſt bountiful Author of thy Life and Being! What wouldſt thou ſay to it if thy own Son did hate the very ſight of thee, and abhor thy preſence and converſe? eſpecially if thou never gave him the leaſt cauſe? If thou haſt been always kind and indulgent, full of paternal affection towards him, Wouldſt thou not think him a vile miſcreant? and reckon the Earth too good to bear him? But how little, and in how low a capacity, didſt thou contribute to his being in compariſon of what the great God did to thine? How little of natural excellency haſt thou above him (it may be

be in many things beſides this unhappy temper he much excels thee) when thou knoweſt, in thy Maker is infinite excellency beyond what thou canſt pretend unto? And what cauſe canſt thou pretend of diſaffection towards him? Many good works hath he done for thee; For which of theſe doſt thou hate him? Whereby hath he ever diſoblig'd thee? With how ſweet and gentle allurements hath he ſought to win thy heart? And is it not moſt vilely unnatural that thy ſpirit ſhould be ſo ſullenly averſe to him, who is pleaſed to be ſtiled the *Father of Spirits*? And in which reſpect it may fitly be ſaid to thee, Doſt thou thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh Crea-
Deut. 32. ture, and unwiſe? *Is not he thy Father --?* If thou didſt hate thy own ſelf (in a ſenſe *beſides that* wherein it is thy duty, and in which kind thou haſt, as thy caſe is, a juſt and dreadful cauſe of ſelf-abhorrence); If thou didſt hate thy very life and being, and wer't laying daily plots of ſelf-deſtruction, thou wer't not ſo wickedly unnatural. He is more intimate to thee than thou art to thy ſelf. That natural love which thou oweſt to thy ſelf, and the nature from whence it ſprings, is *of him*, and ought to be *ſubordinate to him*; And by a *ſuperior Law of Nature*, thy very life if he actually require it, ought to be ſacrific'd and laid down for his ſake: Thy hatred towards him, therefore is more prodigiouſly unnatural, than if it were moſt directly and implacably bent againſt thy ſelf.

And yet alſo in hating him thou doſt moſt miſ-

miſchievouſly hate thy ſelf too; and all that thou doſt, by the inſtinct of that vile temper of heart towards him thou doſt it againſt thy own life and ſoul. Thou cutteſt thy ſelf off from him who is thy life; and art laying a train for the blowing up of thy eternal Hope. *All that hate him love death.* Further, Prov. 8.

3. *It is the moſt comprehenſive wickedneſs, and which entirely contains all other in it.* For as the *Law of Love* is the univerſal and ſummary Law, comprehending all Duty, and even *as it enjoins love to God* (for love to men ought to be reſolved into that, and muſt be for his ſake); ſo muſt *diſaffection to God* be comprehenſive *of all ſin*, whereinto every thing of it reſolves it ſelf. Doſt thou not ſee then how thou cancelleſt and nullifieſt the obligation of all Laws, while thou haſt no *delight in God?* offereſt violence to the very knot and juncture, wherein they all meet and are infolded together? Not to *delight in God* therefore, What can it be but the very top of Rebellion? What will thy ſobriety, thy juſtice, thy charity ſignifie, if thou hadſt theſe to glory in, while thou art habitually diſaffected to thy God? Let *men* value thee for theſe, to whom thereby thou ſheweſt ſome reſpect; But ſhall *he*, who in the mean time knows thou beareſt none to *him?*

4. *It is a moſt reproachful contemptuous wickedneſs!* To *him*, I mean, whom it moſt directly offends againſt! Carries it not in it moſt horrid contumely and indignity to the moſt high God? It is a practical denial of all thoſe excel-

excellencies in him, that render and recommend him the moſt worthy object of *our delight*; it is *more than ſaying*, He is *not good, holy, wiſe, juſt* and *true*. Things may on the ſudden be *ſaid* that are not *deliberately thought*, and may be retracted the next breath; but a mans *ſtated, conſtant courſe* and *way* ſignifies the apprehenſion it proceeds from to be *fixed*, and that it is the *ſetled habitual ſenſe of his Soul.*

Yea, and ſince, as hath been ſaid, Thou *delighteſt* in other things whilſt thou *delighteſt not in him*; It plainly imports it to be the *conſtant ſenſe* of thy very heart, that *thoſe things* are better than *He*. What is it then that hath thy *delight* and *love*? Whereon is thy heart ſet? Commune with thy ſelf. Doſt thou not tremble, when thou findeſt this to be thy very caſe, that thou may'ſt truly ſay, *I can delight in creatures, but not in God; can take pleaſure in my friend, but none in him; I muſt confeſs it to be the temper of my heart, that I love my Father, Mother, Son or Daughter more than Chriſt*: Is it not then to be concluded from his own expreſs word, that thou art not worthy of him, and canſt be none of his Diſciple? Nay, may'ſt thou not moreover truly ſay, that thou loveſt this baſe impure earth more than God? That thou takeſt more *delight* in thy companions in wickedneſs; canſt more ſolace thy ſelf with a drunkard on the Ale-bench, with a laſcivious wanton, with a prophane ſcoffer at godlineſs, than with the bleſſed God? That thou canſt allow

Mat. 10. 13
Luk. 14. 26

thy

thy ſelf to riot with the luxurious, and eat and drink with the drunken, and not only do ſuch things, but *take pleaſure* in them that do them, yea and thy ſelf *take pleaſure* to commit iniquity; but in the glorious holy God thou canſt *take no pleaſure*! Then wouldſt thou be content to carry the plain ſenſe of thy heart written on thy forehead, and proclaim it to all the world, *as thy reſolved practical judgment*, That thou accounteſt *thy Friends, thy Relations, this vile and vaniſhing World, thy wicked Aſſociates, thine own impure luſts, better than God?* And doſt thou not yet ſee the horrid vileneſs of thy own heart in all this? Art thou yet an harmleſs innocent creature, an honeſt well-meaning man for all this?

Yea, wil't thou not ſee, that thine heart goes againſt thy Conſcience all this while? That thou diſaffecteſt him in whom thou knoweſt thou ſhouldſt *delight*? That the temper of thy Spirit is a continual affront to thy profeſſion, through the perfidious falſhood and vanity whereof, thou doſt but cover hatred with lying lips? Is not that an odious thing which thou ſo *ſeekeſt to hide*; and which, though thou art not loath to be guilty of it, thou art ſo very unwilling ſhould be known?

And ſince thou art ſo very loath it ſhould be known, How canſt thou hold up thy head before that eye that is as a flame of fire, that ſearches thy heart and tries thy reins, that obſerves thy wayward ſpirit, and

ſees

ſees with how obſtinate an averſion thou declineſt his acquaintance and converſe? Wilt thou ſtand before the glorious Majeſty of Heaven and Earth, who knows thy diſaffected heart, and ſay, it is but a ſmall tranſgreſſion thou haſt been guilty of, in not *loving him* and making *him* thy *delight*? Doſt thou think this will paſs for a little offence in the ſolemn judgment of the great day that is drawing on? Or will thy heart indure, or thy hands be ſtrong, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be laid open, thou ſhalt ſtand convicted before his Tribunal in the ſight of Angels and Men, of having born all thy days a falſe diſloyal heart, full of malignity and ill-will to thy Soveraign Lord, whom thou waſt ſo many ways obliged to ſerve and cleave to with *delight* and *love*?

When the difference ſhall be viſibly put between thoſe that *delighted in God* and them that *never did*, and thou ſhalt be markt out for one of them that didſt in heart depart from him all thy days, and be thereupon abandon'd to the ſociety of that horrid accurſed crew, in whom only thou didſt *delight*: Surely thou wilt not then ſay, thy tranſgreſſion was ſmall.

2. But we are alſo to *expoſtulate* with *another ſort*; who, though they are not altogether unacquainted with this heavenly exerciſe of *delighting in God*, yet too much diſuſe it, and apply not themſelves to it, (as who do?) with that conſtancy and intention of Soul as the matter requires. And

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theſe we are to put upon the conſideration of ſuch evils, as either *are included* in this neglect, or are ally'd unto it (and do therefore accompany and aggravate the natural evil of it), as either cauſing it, or being cauſed by it. And,

1. Thoſe whom we now intend are to bethink themſelves, *what evil is included* in their neglect of this part of *holy Practice*. And you are to judg of the evil of it by its diſagreement with ſuch known and uſual meaſures, as whereto our practice ſhould be ſutable, and which in reaſon and juſtice it is to be eſtimated and cenſured by; as for inſtance, *The Divine Law*, *Conſcience*, *Experience*, *Obligation by kindneſs*, *Stipulation*, *Relation*, *Profeſſion*, *Tendency of the new Nature*, *Dictates of Gods Spirit*, *The courſe and drift of his deſign*; with all which it will be found to have very ill accord.

1. *How directly oppoſite is it to the Law of God!* Not only to his expreſs *written Precept*, but to that immutable eternal Law which ariſes from our very Natures refer'd unto his! The obligingneſs or binding force whereof, doth not ſo much ſtand in this, *That the thing to be done is ſuch as whereto our Natures were originally inclin'd*, (which yet is of great weight, they having been thus inclin'd and determin'd by our Maker himſelf, ſo that *our inclination* was in this caſe expreſſive of *his Will*); but (which is indeed the very reaſon of *that*, for we muſt conceive the *Divine Wiſdom* in the bleſſed God to con-

conduct all the determinations of *His Will*), *the natural unchangeable congruity of the thing it ſelf.* And therefore as to the things whoſe *conſtant fitneſs* would render them matter of Duty to us *at all times*, it was provided, *inclinations* ſutable to them ſhould be planted in our Natures from the beginning: But things that were to be matter of Duty but *for a time*, having only a *preſent fitneſs* unto ſome preſent juncture or ſtate of affairs, it was ſufficient that the Divine Pleaſure ſhould be ſignified about them in ſome way more ſutable to their *occaſional* and *temporary uſe*, and that might not ſo certainly extend to all men and times.

That great Law of *Love to God* (which comprehends this of *delighting in him*) is you may be ſure of that former ſort, it being impoſſible there ſhould be a reaſonable Creature in being, but it will *immediately* and *always* be his Duty to *love God* ſupreamly and above all things; yea, *that* you muſt know is the moſt fundamental of all ſuch Laws. And therefore, when becauſe original impreſſions were become ſo obſcure and illegible in our Natures, it became neceſſary there ſhould be a new and more expreſs Edition of them in Gods written Word:

This is placed in the very front of them, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me*; Which ſignifies only the having of a God in Name and no more, if it doth not ſignifie *loving him before all other.* Wherefore when our Saviour was to tell which was the *firſt* and *great*

great Commandment, he gives it thus, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind.* Mat. 22. The thing enjoined by this Law is moſt ſubſtantial, the life and ſoul of all other Duty, and without which all that we can do beſides is but meer ſhadow; for whatſoever we are enjoined to do elſe, we muſt underſtand enjoined to be done *out of love to God*, as the *principle* whence it muſt proceed; and not proceeding thence, the moral goodneſs of it vaniſhes as a beam cut off from the Sun. *For on this* (with the other which is like unto it, and which alſo hangs upon this) *hang all the Law and the Prophets.* And what durſt thou who knoweſt God, or rather art known of him, neglect ſo great and ſubſtantial a Duty? This is not like the command of *wearing fringe on the borders of the garment*, or of *not wearing a garment of linnen and woollen*; wherein ſure they whom it concerned ſhould have been very undutiful to have diſobeyed: But it is the very greateſt among the great things of the Law; A Duty upon which all Duty depends, even for life and breath! Should not *this* have obtain'd in thy practice, that ought to run through and animate all the reſt? Or was it fit it ſhould ly dead and bound up in the *habitual principle*, and not go forth (or very rarely) into *act* and *exerciſe*? Or didſt thou do thy duty herein, by being only *inclin'd* to do it? Or would not the *inclination*, if it were right, infer (or otherwiſe is it like to laſt long without) ſutable

Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3. Psa. 44. 19. Job 27. 10. ch. 34. 9. Isa. 58. 14. *exercise*? Why was so *express a Law* neglected, so often enjoined (or the practice mentioned with approbation, or the neglect of it animadverted upon with abhorrence, in the very terms, or in terms evidently enough of the same import) in the Sacred Volume? How could you turn over the leaves of that Book and not often meet with such words, Psal. 33. 1. 97. 12. Phil. 3. 1. 4. 4. *Rejoice in the Lord ye righteous*; *Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say to you rejoice, &c.* Should not so *frequent inculcations* of the same thing have been answered by the *frequency* and *continuedness* of your *practice* of it? Or was it enough now and then, as it were *casually* and by chance, to *hit* upon the doing of what is so momentous a part of your Religion, and ought to be the business of your life? Ought it not to cut your heart to find your self convicted herein of a disobedient omission? And when the great God exacts that stated homage from you, *A frequent, practical, explicite recognition and owning of him as the supream delight, the great solace, repose and rest of your Souls*, that you have been so little aw'd with the apprehension of his *authority* and *right* in this case? When he hath mercifully chosen, to make *that* the matter of his command and claim, wherein your own advantage, satisfaction and content doth so entirely consist? That your *practice* is herein *disagreeable to a Law*, speaks it *sinful*; that it transgresses *so great a Law*, highly *aggravates* your sin: A Law so important, upon which so much depends, so express and plain, legible in

in the very nature of things, and in reference whereto, the very *excellency* of the *object* would ſuffice to be a *Law* to you, and dictate your duty, if no command had been otherwiſe given in the caſe. Surely the neglect of *ſuch a Law* cannot have been without *great tranſgreſſion.*

2. *Your own Conſcience you will acknowledg ought to be a Rule to you, when it manifeſtly agrees with that former Rule, The ſupream and Royal Law.* Do you not find your ſelves herein to have offended againſt that? It may be your ſleeping Conſcience did not find your ſelf to offend: But do you not find your ſelf to have offended it, now beginning to awake? This is not a doubtful and diſputable matter, (perhaps your minding ſuch matters too much, hath hindered you in this), ſurely you will not make a ſcruple of it, a difficult caſe of Conſcience, *Whether you ſhould take the Lord of Heaven and Earth for your God?* Whether you ſhould chuſe him for your portion, ſeek reſt in him, and place upon him your *delight* and *love*? And if in ſo plain a caſe your Conſcience hath not expreſt it ſelf offended, you have offended againſt it, in letting it ſleep ſo ſecurely, and not ſtirring it up to its proper office and work. And know, that *ſinning againſt the light of ones own Conſcience*, doth not ſtand only *in going againſt the actual deliberated thoughts which we have had*, but alſo in walking contrary to our *habitual knowledg*, and the *thoughts* and *apprehenſions* which thence we *might and*

ſhould actually have had; Inadvertency and diſregard of known duty, is the moſt uſual way of *ſinning againſt Conſcience.* And beſides, Have you not in this often gone againſt the repeated checks of your own Conſciences! Bethink your ſelves, Have you not in your prayers intermingled frequent confeſſions of your cold love to God, and that you have taken ſo little *delight* in him? And were thoſe only *cuſtomary forms* with you, and words of courſe? Surely (though it might not be urgently enough) your Conſciences did at ſuch times accuſe you. And let that be a dreadful thing in your eyes, to continue a courſe which, if you *conſider*, you cannot but *condemn.* And,

3. *Ought not your Experience to have been inſtructive to you*; as it commonly is to men in other matters? Have you not in this neglect run counter to ſuch inſtruction? By this means you are ſuppos'd to have known the *ſweetneſs*, as by that laſt mentioned, the *equity* and *fitneſs* of *delight* in God. Have not thoſe been your beſt hours, wherein you could freely ſolace your ſelves in him? was not one of them better than a thouſand otherwiſe ſpent! Did you never find it *good for you*, in this way, *to draw nigh to God?* and hereupon *pronounce them bleſſed whom he did chuſe, and cauſe to approach unto him?* And where is that *bleſſedneſs* of which ye ſpake? Have ye forgotten, that ye ever thus taſted how gracious the Lord was? And 'tis like, you have *by your taſte* found it alſo an *evil*

Pſal. 73.

Pſal. 65.

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thing and bitter to depart from him. Methinks you ſhould reckon it a great increaſe of your ſin to have gone againſt your own ſenſe, when eſpecially, your ſuperior rule might give you aſſurance it did not deceive you. And doth it not expreſly *oblige* you to follow its guidance, while it puts the character of *perfect*, or of *being come to full age*, upon them, who *by reaſon of uſe* (or accuſtomedneſs) have *ſenſes exerciſed* to diſcern between Good and Evil? Heb 5. 14.

4. *And what will you ſay to the great obligations which the love and kindneſs of God have laid upon you?* Will you not eſteem your ſelves to have been thereby bound to place your *love* and *delight* on him? Could you decline doing ſo without putting a ſlight upon his *love*, who is infinite in what he is, and *who is love?* was not his *love* enough to deſerve yours? The *love* of a God, that of a ſilly worm! Were you not oblig'd to *love* him back again, who was ſo much before-hand with you in the matter of *love? To love him who had loved you firſt?* The firſt *love* is *Therefore* perfectly free; the latter is thereby certainly obliged and become bounden duty. How variouſly and with how mighty demonſtration hath that *love* expreſt and evidenc't it ſelf? It hath not glanc't at you, but reſted on you, and ſetled *in delight.* He hath ſo ſtood affected towards the people of his choice, and put a name on them on purpoſe to ſignifie his *delight* in them. *He rejoices over them with joy, and reſts in his love to them. The Lord taketh pleaſure in his people.* 1 John 4. Iſa. 62. 4. Zeph. 3. Pſal. 149.

Prov. 8. *ple. His delights have* from of old *been with the Sons of men.* Could He *delight* in ſuch as you, and cannot you in him? Be amazed at this! How mean an Object had he for his *delight!* How glorious and enamouring a one have you! *Excellency* and *Love* in conjunction! whereas in you were met *Deformity* and *ill-will!* He hath loved you ſo as to remit to you much. To give to you and for you a great deal more, Himſelf and the Son of his *delights.* He then (thou ſhouldſt recount) did invite thee *to delight in him* who hath always ſought thy good, done ſtrange things to effect it, takes pleaſure in thy proſperity and exerciſes loving kindneſs towards thee with *delight?* Who contrived thy Happineſs; wrought out thy Peace at the expence of Blood, even *his own*; Taught thee the way of Life, cared for thee all thy days, hath ſupplied thy wants, born thy burdens, eas'd thy griefs, wip't thy tears. And if now he ſay to thee; *After all this couldſt thou take no pleaſure in me?* Will not that confound and ſhame thee? He hath expreſt his *love* by his ſo earneſt (and at laſt ſucceſsful) endeavours to gain thine. By *this*, that he hath ſeemed to put a value on it; and that he deſiſted not till in ſome degree he had won it: Whereupon there hath been an acquaintance, a friendſhip, ſome intimacies between him and thee, according as ſovereign Majeſty hath vouchſafed to deſcend, and advance ſinful duſt. And how diſingenuous, unbecoming and unſutable to all this is thy ſtrangeneſs and diſtance afterwards! It

is

it is more unworthy to caſt out of your hearts than not to have admitted ſuch a gueſt.

5. How contrary is this omiſſion to what by ſolemn *vow and aſtipulation* you have bound your ſelves to? It hath graciouſly pleaſed the bleſſed God in his tranſactions with men to contrive his Laws into the *form of a Covenant*, wherein upon terms, he binds himſelf to them, expecting (what he obtains from ſuch as become his own) *their reſtipulation.* Wonderful grace! that he ſhould article with his Creatures, and capitulate with the work of his own hands! And whereas his firſt and great *Law* (and whichvirtually being ſubmitted to comprehends our obedience to all the reſt) is as hath been noted, *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before me*; This alſo he gives forth often, as the ſum and abridgment of his *Covenant*, *That he will be our God, and we ſhall be his people.* Now this you have conſented to; and therein bound your ſelves, (as you have heard our Saviour expounds the firſt and great Commandment) *To love him with all your ſoul*, &c. And how well doth your neglect to *delight* in him agree and conſiſt with this? What, love him with all your ſoul in whom you can rarely find your ſelves to take any pleaſure? Surely your hearts will now miſgive and admit a conviction you have not dealt *truly* (as well as not *kindly*) in this. What, not to keep Faith with the righteous God! To deceive a Deceiver ſome would think not intolerable. But what pretence can there be for ſuch deal-

ing with the God of Truth? You have vow'd to him, What think you of this drawing back? Such trifling with *him*; the great and terrible God who keeps Covenant and Mercy for ever! How unbecoming is it! to dally with him as you would with an *uncertain whiffling man?* To be off and on, to say and unsay, that he shall be your God, and that he shall not, (for how is he your God if you *delight* not in him?) imports little of that solemn gravity and stayedness which becomes a transaction with the most High God. He takes no pleasure in fools; *Wherefore pay that which you have vowed.* Eccl. 5.

6. *Nor doth it better agree with your Relation to him, which arises from your Covenant.* Thence he becomes yours and you his: *I entred into Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine*; and the Covenant binding on both parts, the relation is *mutual*; so that thereby also he becomes yours: It is a most *near*, represented therefore by the neareſt among men, even the conjugal, relation; Therefore how full is that *Song of Songs* of expressions importing mutual *delights* suitable thereto! And what a bondage (as well as incongruity) were *that* relation without *delight*? Have you repented your Choice? If not, Why take you not pleasure? Why do you not rejoice and glory in it, even as he professes to do over you? If he should repent, In what case were you? Not to take pleasure, in *God!* Your *own God!* How strangely uncouth is it? You are not to consider him as a stranger, an unrelated one. If he were such to you his own excellencies challenge to be beheld

beheld with *delight*; But you are to reckon and ſay of him, *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend*, &c. *I am his and he is mine.* And how ill do ſuch words become the mouth that utters them not *from the abundance of the heart!* even from an heart abounding and overflowing with Love and Joy!

7. *And how doth the temper of your heart and your practice, while you take not actual, ordinary delight in God, claſh and jar with your profeſſion?* For admit you do not then make an expreſs verbal profeſſion of *actual delight in God* at ſuch times when you find it not, yet you ſtill avow your ſelves, and would be accounted and lookt upon as *related to him:* And the juſt challenges of that relation are not any way anſwered, but by a courſe of ordinary actual *delight.* So much your Profeſſion manifeſtly imports. Whilſt you profeſs the Lord to be your God, you profeſs him to be your *ſupream delight.* And how is he ſo, when you ſeldom have a *delightful* thought of him, or look to him with any pleaſure? and the temper of your Spirit towards him is uſually ſtrange and ſhie? And bethink your ſelves, What would you then be eſteemed? ſuch as care not for him, as value him not? Would you willingly be taken for ſuch in all thoſe long intervals wherein your actual *delight* in him is wholly diſcontinued? Would you not be aſhamed the diſpoſition of your heart towards him at ſuch times ſhould be known? Do you not deſire to be better thought of? What is there then at the bot-

bottom, and under the covert of your yet continued profeſſion at ſuch times, but falſehood? A correſpondent affection there is not. Is not your very profeſſion then meer diſſimulation and a lie? A concealment and diſguiſe of an heart inwardly bad and naught? but which only comforts it ſelf that it is not known; that is all day long full of earth and vanity, and wholly taken up with either the contentments, *delights* and hopes, or the cares, fears, and diſcontents that do naturally ariſe from theſe vile mean Objects, and ſo are of a kind as mean and vile as they; Only makes a ſhift to lie hid all the while, and lurk under the appearance ſuch a one hath put on of a *Lover of God*, and one that above all things *delights* in him. But is this honeſt dealing? or was this indeed all that was *this while* to be got of God, *the credit of being thought his?*

Yet it may be you will ſomewhat relieve your ſelves, by ſaying you ſuppoſe for all this your profeſſion was not altogether falſe. For you hope there was ſtill a Principle in you by which your heart was habitually directed towards God, and whereby his Intereſt did ſtill live and was maintained in you, notwithſtanding your many and long diverſions from him. And while your Profeſſion did ſignifie that, it ſignified *ſome real thing*, and ſo was not a falſe and lying Profeſſion.

But to this I ſay, Was this all that your Profeſſion was in it ſelf *apt*, and *by you deſigned* to ſignifie? Surely it was apt and intended to ſignifie more than *habitual inclination*. It carried

ried the appearance of ſuch actings Godward as were ſutable to your having him for your God; And you would it's likely have been loth it ſhould have been otherwiſe underſtood. And ſurely whatſoever it ſaid or imported *more than the Truth* was falſe.

And again, Can you be confident that ſo much as you ſuppoſe, was true? Are you ſure of this, that becauſe you have ſometimes found ſome motions of heart towards God, it is therefore *habitually* inclin'd to him, when it very rarely puts forth it ſelf in any ſutable acts, and for the moſt part works quite another way? Whereby are Habits to be known but by the frequency of their acts? Do not you know there are many half-inclinations and workings of heart with ſome complacency God-ward that prove abortive and come to nothing, as that of the *ſtony ground*, and that of *Heb.* 6. 4. do more than intimate. Surely your hope and ſafety more depend upon your repentance, your return and cloſer adherence to God thereupon, than the ſuppoſition your heart is in the main ſound and right amidſt thoſe more notable declinings from him.

But we will admit your ſuppoſition true (which the conſideration of the perſons we are now dealing with and the Deſign of this preſent Piece of our Diſcourſe requires) and take it for granted, that amidſt this your great neglect, you have notwithſtanding, a Principle, a new and holy nature in you, whoſe tendency is Godward: Whereupon we further ſay then,

8. *And*

8. *And doth not your unaccuſtomedneſs to this bleſſed exerciſe reſiſt the Tendency of that new nature?* And ſo your *practice* while your heartsrun a quite contrary courſe (for they are not doing nothing while they are not in this *delightful* way working towardsGod) doth not only offend againſt your *profeſſion* which it *in great part* belies; but againſt that vital Principle alſo, which is in you; and ſo your very excuſe aggravates your ſin. Is there indeed ſuch a Principle in you? And whither tends it? Is it not from God? And doth it not then naturally aim at him and tend towards him? Being upon both thoſe accounts (as well as that it reſembles him, and is his living Image) called a *participation of the Divine Nature?* Yea, doth it not tend to *delight in him?* For it tends to him *as the Souls laſt end and reſt.* What good Principle can you have in you Godward if you have not *Love to him?* And the property of that is to work towards him by deſire, that it may reſt in him by *delight.* Have you Faith in God? That works by this *Love.* *Faith* is that *great power* in the Holy Soul by which it *acts from God* as a *Principle*; Love is that by which it acts towards him as an *End*; By *that* it *draws from him*, by *this* it *moves to him*, and *reſts in him.* The ſame holy gracious nature (dependently on its great Author and Cauſe) inclining it both to this *motion* and *reſt*; and to the former, in order to the latter: So by the work of the new Creature is the Soul formed purpoſely for bleſſedneſs in God and devotedneſs to him; its aſpirations, its motions, its very

very pulſe, breath, tend and beat this way. But you apply not your Souls to *delight in God.* You bend your minds and hearts another way; What are you doing then? You are ſtriving againſt your own life; you are mortifying all good inclinations towards God, ſtifling and ſtopping the breath that your panting heart would ſend forth to him; you are buſily *crucifying the new creature*, inſtead of the *body of ſin.* There is ſomewhat in you that would work towards God, and you ſuffer it not; And is that well? That *Divine thing, born of God*, of heavenly deſcent, that hath ſo much in it of ſacredneſs by its extraction and parentage, you fear not to do violence to!

If indeed ſuch a thing (as you ſeem to hope) be in you; at ſometime or other you may perceive which way it beats and tends. The Soul in which it hath place is byaſs'd by it Godward; and though often it is not diſcernible, it ſometimes ſhews its inclination. Other men, and meaner creatures, ſleep ſometimes, and then their moſt rooted diſpoſitions appear not; when they are awake they bewray them, and let them be ſeen in their actions, motions and purſuits. The renewed Soul hath its ſleeping intervals too, and what propenſions it hath towards God is little diſcernible, (and yet even then it ſometimes dreams of him, at leaſt between ſleeping and waking; *I ſleep, but my heart waketh, it is the voice of my beloved*): But if you ſeriouſly commune with your ſelves in your more wake- Cant. 5.

ful

ful ſeaſons, you may perceive what your hearts ſeek and crave; ſome ſuch ſenſe as this may be read in them, *The deſire of our Souls is unto thy Name, O Lord, and to the remembrance of thee. One thing have I deſired, that will I ſeek after, to behold the beauty (the delight,* as the word ſignifies) *of the Lord.* And when you obſerve this diſcovered inclination, you may ſee what it is that in your too wonted courſe you repreſs and ſtrive againſt. That Divine Birth calls for ſutable nutriment, *more taſtes* how gracious the Lord is. You will have it *feed upon aſhes*, upon wind and vanity; or (although it had the beſt Parent, it hath ſo ill a Nurſe) when it asks bread, you give it a ſtone, and let it be ſtung by a Scorpion: And the injury ſtrikes higher than at *it alone*, even (as is obvious) at the very Author of this Divine Production; Which therefore we add as a further aggravation of this evil, *viz.*

Iſa. 26.

Pſal. 27.

9. That it's an offence againſt the *Spirit of Grace*, whoſe dictates are herein ſlighted and oppoſed; for ſurely with the tendencies of the new creature he concurs: It is maintained by him as well as produced, continually depends on him as to its being, properties, and all its operations. Nothing therefore can be croſs to the inclination of a renewed Soul, *as ſuch*, which is not more principally *ſo* to the Holy Ghoſt himſelf. And particularly the *diſpoſing* of the Soul unto *delight* is moſt expreſly aſcribed to him; that very *diſpoſition* being it ſelf *joy in the Holy Ghoſt*: And we find it numbred

Rom. 14. 17.

bered among the *fruits of the Spirit.* You may poſſibly be leſs apprehenſive of your ſin in this, becauſe you find him not dictating to you with that diſcernible Majeſty, Authority and Glory that you may think agreeable to ſo great an Agent. But you muſt know, he applies himſelf to us in a way much imitating that of nature. And as in reference to the conſervation of our natural beings, we are aſſured the Firſt Cauſe cooperates with Inferiour Cauſes (for we live, move, and have our being in him), though the Divine influence is not communicated to this purpoſe with any *ſenſible glory*, or ſo diſtinguiſhably, that we can *diſcern* what influence is from the ſuperiour Cauſe and what from ſubordinate; our *reaſon* and *faith* certainly aſſure us of what our *ſenſe* cannot reach in this matter: So it is here alſo, The *Divine Spirit* accommodates himſelf very much to the ſame way of working with our *own*, and acts us ſutably to our own Natures. And though by very ſenſible tokens we cannot always tell which be the motions that proceed from him; yet Faith teaches us from his Word, to aſcribe to him whatever ſpiritual good we find in our ſelves; inaſmuch as *we are not of our ſelves ſufficient to think a good thought.* And if by that Word we judg of the various motions that ſtir in us, we may diſcern which are *good* and which not; and ſo may know what to aſcribe to the Spirit, and what not. Whereas therefore that Word commands us to *delight in God*, if we find any motion

Gal. 5. 22.

Act. 17.

in

in our hearts tending that way, we are presently to own the finger of God, and the touch of his Holy Spirit therein. And what have you found no such motions excited, no thoughts cast in that have had this aspect and tendency, which your indulged carnality and aversion have repress and counterwrought? Herein you have *grieved and quencht the Spirit.*

And if it have not over-born you into what you should have understood to have been your duty, but have upon your untractableness retired and withdrawn from you; Do not therefore make the *less reckoning* of the matter, but the *more* rather; this carries more in it of awful consideration to you, and smarter rebuke *that He desisted.* You must consider him as a free Agent, and who works to will and to do *of his good pleasure.* His influence is retractable, and when it is retracted, you ought in this case to reckon it signifies a resentment of your undutiful and regardless carriage towards him. And ought you not to smite upon the thigh then, and say, *What have I done?* You have striven against the Spirit of the most High God; You have resisted him *in the execution of his Office*, when you were committed to his Conduct and Government; you have fal'n out and quarrelled with your merciful Guide, and slighted at once both his *Authority* and *Love.* This could be no small offence. And you are also to consider, that when such a Province was assigned him in reference to you, and such as you; and the great

God

God ſet his Spirit on work about you. It was with a ſpecial end and deſign, being the determination of moſt wiſe Counſel.

And how highly doth this increaſe the offence? That,

1o. You have herein directly obſtructed the courſe and progreſs of that Deſign; *That* could be no other than *the magnifying of his grace in your conduct to bleſſedneſs.* This is that whereon he hath been intent; and he hath made his Deſign herein ſo viſible, that they that run might read what it was. The very overture to you of placing your *delights* on him ſpeaks its end; 'Tis that whereby he ſhould be moſt highly acknowledg'd and you bleſſed both at once. His *known deſign* you ought to have reckoned did *preſcribe to you*, and give you *a Law*; 'Tis a part of civility *towards even an ordinary man*, not to croſs his Deſign which I know him earneſtly to intend, when it tends no way to my prejudice, or any mans; Yea, to do ſo would in common interpretation, beſides *rudeneſs*, argue *ill nature* and a miſchievous diſpoſition. Much more would *duty* and juſt obſervance *towards a ſuperior* challenge ſo much, as not to counterwork him, and *awe* a well-temper'd ſpirit into ſubjection and compliance; but a ſtiff reluctancy to the great and known Deſign of the bleſſed God, meant ſo directly to our own advantage, ſpeaks ſo very bad a temper; hath in it ſuch a complication of peeviſh wilfulneſs, of undutifulneſs and ingratitude to him, of negligence and diſregard of our ſelves,

that it muſt want a name to expreſs it.

And now do you ſee what evil the neglect *of delighting in God* (accompanied as it cannot but be with the having your hearts otherwiſe ingaged and vainly buſie) doth include and carry in it? Will you pauſe a while and deliberate upon it? Do but make your juſt and ſober eſtimate by the things that have been mentioned.

Meaſure it by *Gods Law*, and it imports manifeſt *diſobedience* in a matter of higheſt conſequence; by the judgment of *your own conſcience*, and it imports *much boldneſs againſt light* in a very plain caſe; by *your experience*, and it ſpeaks an *uninſtructible ſtupidity*, or a very heedleſs forgetful ſpirit; by the *obligation* laid upon you, by the kindneſs of this very counſel and offer (beſides many other ways), and it hath in it *great ingratitude* and *inſenſibleneſs* of the greateſt love; by your *Covenant*, and it imports *treachery*; by your *Relation*, much *incongruity* and *undecency*; by your Profeſſion, *falſhood* and *hypocriſie*; by the *tendency of the new nature* in you, *unnatural violence*; by the *Dictates of Gods Spirit*, great *untractableneſs*; by his *known declared Deſign* in this matter, a moſt *undutiful diſreſpect* to him, with a moſt wretched careleſneſs of your ſelves, as to your neareſt and moſt important concern.

One would think it needleſs to ſay more; But why ſhould we balk any thing that ſo obviouſly occurs, tending to ſet forth the exceeding great ſinfulneſs of this ſin? Therefore

fore know, that beſides its great faultineſs in it ſelf,

Much alſo cannot but be derived into it from its very faulty cauſes. It ſuppoſes and argues great evils that flow into it, and from which it hath its riſe. II.

1. Great *blindneſs* and *ignorance* of God; For is it poſſible any ſhould have *known* and not have *loved* him? or have *beheld* his glory and not have been *delighted* therewith? and that with ſuch *delight* and *love* as ſhould have held a ſetled ſeat and reſidence in them.

And can *your ignorance* of God be excuſable or innocent? The Apoſtles words are too applicable; *Some have not the knowledg of God, I ſpeak it to your ſhame.* Do you pretend to him, and know him not? Worſhip him ſo oft, and *worſhip you know not what?* Had ſuch opportunity of knowing him, and yet be ignorant? at leaſt it would be thought, *In Judah is God known, and that his Name were great in Iſrael*, where he hath had his Tabernacle and dwelling place. Here one would think his Altar ſhould not bear the ſame Inſcription as at *Athens*, *To the unknown God.* How *expreſs* hath his diſcovery of himſelf been to you! and how *amiable!* What was there in it not *delectable?* or in reſpect whereof he hath not appeared altogether *lovely?* as it were compoſed of *delights?* You have had opportunity to behold him clad with the Garments of Salvation and Praiſe; And as *he is in Chriſt*, in that alluring poſture, *reconciling the world to him-* 1 Cor. 15. Pſal. 76. 1. 2. Acts 17. 2 Cor. 5.

ſelf, wherein all his Attributes have viſibly comply'd to the reconciling deſign; His boundleſs fulneſs of *life* and *love* not obſtructed by any of them, from flowing out in rich and liberal communications. If you had not excluded that glorious pleaſant light wherein he is ſo to be beheld, you would have beheld what had won your hearts fully, and bound them to him in everlaſting *delight* and *love*. And have you not reaſon to be aſhamed you have not known him better, and to better purpoſe? *Alienation from the*
Eph. 4. 18. *life of God* proceeds from *blindneſs of heart*, *i. e.* a choſen affected voluntary blindneſs. Or if your knowledg of him be not little,

2. Your *little delight in him* argues *much unmindfulneſs of him*; At leaſt that you have not minded him *duly*, and according to what you have known. It might here be ſeaſonable to ſuggeſt to you, how likely it is, that *ſeveral ways* your great faultineſs in the matter of *thinking of God* may have contributed to the withholding of your *delight* from him. Conſider therefore,

1. Have not your *thoughts* of him been *ſlight* and *tranſient*? Have they not been overly ſuperficial thoughts? *caſual* only, and ſuch as have dropt into your minds as it were by chance, fluid and roving, *fixed* neither *upon him* nor *into your hearts*? Too much reſem-
Pſal. 10. bling what is ſaid of the wicked man, *God is not in all his thoughts*; He hath not been *amidſt them*. Your thoughts have not *united* upon him, he hath not been *ſituated* and

cen-

centred in them. Was not this the caſe? You beſtowed upon him it may be now and then an haſty paſſant glance, the careleſs caſt of a wandering eye; and was this likely to beget an abiding permanent *delight*? Have you been wont to compoſe your ſelves deſignedly and on purpoſe to think of him, ſo as your thoughts might be ſaid to have been *directed* towards him by the *deſire* and inclining bent of your heart; according to that, *The deſire of our Soul is towards thy name, and to the remembrance of thee?* Whence it is that 'tis repreſented as the *uſual poſture* of them whom he reckons among his Jewels, and for whom the book of *remembrance* was written, that *they thought on his name.* A thing that they might be *known by*, and diſtinguiſht from other men; (wherefore it is obſervable, that their *remembrance* of him, was thought worth the *remembring*, and to be tranſmitted into records, never to be forgotten). The evil of your *not-delighting in God*, hath a great acceſſion from your negligent thinking of him.

Iſa. 26. 8.

Mal. 3.

2. Have not your thoughts of Him been *low* and *mean*, ſuch as have imported *light eſteem*? Compare them with thoſe admiring thoughts, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods! Who is like thee, glorious in holineſs! O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!* How unlike have yours been to ſuch thoughts? Bethink your ſelves, how deeply culpable you have made your neglect to *delight in God*, by your unworthy thoughts,

Deut. 32. 15.

Pſal. 8.

by which you have detracted ſo unſpeakably from the Divine excellency! Hence you have more to account for than meerly *not-delighting in God*, a rendering him ſuch to your ſelves, as if he were *not worthy to be delighted in.* How ought this to ſhake your hearts!

3. Have they not been *hard thoughts*; full of cenſure, and misjudging of his Nature, Counſels, Ways and Works? Have there not been perverſe reaſonings, with diſlike of his Methods of Government over men *in this preſent ſtate?* As if he had *too little* kindneſs for ſuch as you would have him favour, and *too much* for others; Judging his *love* and *hatred* by falſe meaſures? This ſeems to be much the evil unto which the Injunction of *delight in God* is *here* oppoſed in this Pſalm; and whence it may be eſtimated, how directly *that* militates againſt *this*, and prevailing, excludes it. Perhaps you have *delighted* ſo little in God, becauſe ye have thought (the thing that is ſo wearifom to him), *Every*
Mal. 2. 17. *one that doth evil is good in the ſight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them*; and have ſaid in your hearts, *Where is the God of Judgment.*

Or have you not been more peccant in your apprehenſions of his *rules* and *reſolutions* for the diſpoſing of men *as to their eternal ſtates?* Have you not disbelieved the *revelation* he hath given of his Nature, and expreſs declarations of his mind and purpoſe touching theſe matters? Was it not enough for you to have known his gracious propen-

ſions

ſions towards returning ſinners, that deſire him *again* for their God, and willingly accept the grace, and ſubmit themſelves to the conduct and government of his Son? Should not this have allured and won your hearts to him, and made you, with humble thankful admiration of his grace, reſign and yeild your ſelves to be his for ever? Have you not meaſured your apprehenſions of him by the ſuggeſtions and miſgivings of your guilty jealous hearts; or by your experienc'd animoſity, and the implacableneſs of your own ſpirits towards ſuch as have offended *you*; as if he could forgive no more than you are diſpos'd to do? Have you not oppos'd your own imaginations of him to his expreſs teſtifications of himſelf, that *He is Love; Slow to anger, and of great mercy, &c. And that as the heavens are high above the earth, ſo are his ways above your ways, and his thoughts above your thoughts?* Have you not (againſt his plain word) thought him irreconcilable, and averſe to the accepting of any atonement for you? preſcribed and ſet bounds to him, and thought your ſin *greater than could be forgiven*? And if hereupon you have not *delighted* in him, and have found all ingenuous affection towards him ſtifled within you, as your *not-delighting in him*, was a foul evil; *the more-ſinful injurious cauſe* (denying the infinite goodneſs of his Nature, and giving the lye to his Word) hath made it beyond all expreſſion worſe. And further at leaſt conſider,

4. Have not your thoughts of God been *few*? Is not the meditation of him with you an unwonted thing? The *Pſalmiſt*, *reſolving to mind him much, To praiſe and ſing to him as long as he lived, and while he had any being*, Doth as it were propheſie to himſelf, that *his meditation of him ſhould be ſweet.* Frequent (right) thoughts of God, will ſurely be pleaſant delightful thoughts: But your *little delight in God* too plainly argues, you have minded him but ſeldom. And how full of guilt is your *not-delighting in God* upon this account? How cheap is the expence of a thought? What, that ſo much ſhould not be done in order to the *delightful reſt* of your Soul in God!

Pſal. 104. 33.

3. It ſuppoſes much *carnality*, a prone inclination and addictedneſs to this earth and the things of it; And thereupon argues in you a very mean abject ſpirit. While you can take no pleaſure (or do take ſo little) in God, is there nothing elſe wherein you take pleaſure? And what is it? God hath in this matter no other rival than *this world.* 'Tis its *friendſhip* that is *enmity* to him; ſomething or other of it, *The luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye*, or *the pride of life prevails far*, while *the love of the Father hath ſo little place in you.* Whither are you ſunk? into how low and vile a temper of ſpirit, when you can take pleaſure in ſo baſe things, rather than in the bleſſed God; and quit ſo high and pure *delights* for mire and dirt? What hath thus carnalized your minds, that you ſavour only

Jam. 4. 4. 1 Joh. 2.

only the things of the flesh, and Divine things are tasteless and without relish?

Nor are you to think more favourably of your case, if you take *little actual complacency* in the world also; probably it is because you have little of it to *delight* in; it may be you are more acquainted with the *cares* of it than the *delights*; or your *desire* after it is much larger than your *possession*. 'Tis all one for that. But what are your hearts *most apt* to *delight in*? or, what is most agreeable to your temper? 'Tis the same thing, what earthly affection predominates in you, while the *temper of your spirit is earthly*; and it is thereby held off from God. Your not-having actual earthly delights to put in the balance against heavenly, is only by accident. But all your cares, desires and hopes of that vile kind, would turn into as vile delights, if you had your wills. In the mean time, you are the more excuseless, and your sin is the grosser, That even the *cares* and *troubles* of *this world* are of more value with you than *delight in God*. How far are you from that temper, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and whom do I desire on earth besides thee?* Psal. 73.

4. And how sad an argument is it, *of downright aversion and disaffectedness to God, in a great degree at least yet remaining!* Whence can your *not-delighting in him* proceed, but from this, *as its most immediate cause*? What could hinder you, if your heart were inclin'd? Are you not astonisht, to behold this as the state of your case, That you *delight not in him*,

him, becauſe your heart is againſt it; that is, *from flat enmity.*

And what doth more naturally import enmity to any thing, than to turn off from it, as not being able to take pleaſure in it. So God expreſſes his deteſtation of Apoſtates,

Heb. 10. *If any man draw back, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* And his contempt of *Jechoniah* is ſignified by the like manner of ſpeaking. Do you not tremble to think that this ſhould be the temper of your ſpirit towards God, and that your eſtimate of him, as if

Jer. 22. he were a *deſpiſed broken Idol*, and as mean a thing, as a *veſſel wherein is no pleaſure?* Reckon then thus with your ſelf; As your caſe ſtands, and things do lye between God and you, your *little delight in God* can have no more favourable account given of it, nor be reſolved into any gentler or milder cauſe than *enmity.*

And if this ſeem to you not to be a *cauſe*, but to be *coincident*, and fall in with it, ſo much the worſe. By how much leſs this *enmity* hath of *antecedency* to your *neglect*, or the more it ſeems *the ſame* with it, ſo much the more it diſcovers the *evil* of the *thing it ſelf.* For by what worſe name can we call any thing than *enmity to God?* But we ſpeak of your *habitual temper*, as that which is the cauſe of your *actual neglect.* And ſince you have a diſcovery of God as the moſt delectable Object, cannot pretend there is a better, have leave and free permiſſion to place your *delight* on him, yea are earneſtly invited and preſt

preſt to it, 'Tis plain, nothing elſe is in your way to hinder you; Therefore you *delight not in him*, becauſe your *heart only is averſe.*

3. We alſo might inſiſt further to ſhew *the evils that enſue and follow upon this neglect*: Such I mean, as do not follow *caſually* and by *accident*, but which have a very *inward connexion* with it, and are its moſt *natural conſequents*; being ſome way *cauſed by it*, or which it doth very *directly tend* to beget. III.

And yet theſe we need not be ſolicitouſly curious to diſtinguiſh, as things of a *kind* altogether diverſe from thoſe laſt mentioned under the foregoing head.

For it is very apparent, the ſame things may both *cauſe little delight in God*, and *be cauſed thereby*; As a perſon may therefore *not delight in God* becauſe he *knows him not*, and may therefore be the leſs apt to entertain the *knowledg of him*, becauſe he hath *no delight in him.* And the caſe is the ſame as to the other things ſpoken of as *cauſes* of this omiſſion, *i. e.* that *it* and *they* may be mutual cauſes of one another. But it however equally ſerves the deſign of aggravating the evil of not taking frequent actual *delight in God*, that hereby *ſin grows*, whether in the *ſame* or in *different kinds*; There is ſtill an increaſe of ſin, though but of the ſame ſort that was in being before.

You ought to conſider then, As you take ſo little *delight in God* from that very bad cauſe,

cauſe, that you have not entertained the right knowledg of him, when you had ſo great opportunity to get much of it, which makes your matter very ill; Do you not alſo find that by your withholding your ſelves from *delighting in him*, you have ſtill leſs diſpoſition to ſeek his more inward acquaintance? And doth not that make your matter much worſe? If you already know ſomewhat of him, you yet know but in part; your object is infinite, and this knowledg ſo excellent, that you cannot fully attain to it, there is ſtill more to be known.

Now therefore if you did *delight much in* Pſal. 63. *God*, would you not be *preſſing hard after him*? Hoſ. 6. would you not be *following on to know him?* And then would his goings forth be prepared before you as the morning, and he would be ſtill viſiting you with freſh and increaſing light; whereupon your pleaſure would be renewed and increaſed by every freſh view, and conſequently your progreſs would be from ſight to ſight, and from pleaſure to pleaſure; whereas now this wheel ſtands ſtill, or you are going back into darkneſs and deſolation. Have you not much the more to anſwer for upon this account?

The like may be ſaid as to the reſt. The irrectitude and great faultineſs of your thoughts of God, though that contribute not a little to your *not-delighting in him*, yet alſo, if you did *delight in him more*, would not your thoughts of him be more deeply ſerious, more highly raiſed? Would you not be very unapt

to

to take up injurious hard thoughts of him? Would not his thoughts (once become precious to you) be alſo numerous, or innumerable rather, as the ſands of the Sea-ſhore? Pſal. 139. Would not your earthly temper, your ſtrangeneſs and averſneſs to him, vaniſh and wear off, if you were more exerciſed in actual delightful converſes with him? Therefore the permanency and increaſe of thoſe mentioned evils, and that they have got ſuch ſetled rooting in you, is all to be charged upon your not-applying your ſelves to more frequent *actual delight in God.*

Beſides what may further follow hereupon, *The languiſhment and decays of your inward man*; *The difficulty you find to truſt in God*, when you are reduc'd to ſtraits, (as who would commit his concernments to one he doth not love?); *Your impatience of adverſe and croſs emergencies*, that may often befal to you; *Your aptneſs to vexation or deſpondency*; *The eaſie victory a temptation hath over you*, as ſurely he is ſooner drawn away from God, or into ſin againſt him, who delights not in him); *Your leſs-uſefulneſs in your place and ſtation*; *Your want of courage, reſolution, zeal for God*, (which are beſt maintained by *delight* and the reliſhes of a ſweet complacency taken in him); *Your ſluggiſhneſs in a courſe of well-doing*; *The ſenſe of a toilſom heavy labour in Religion*, that it begets you wearineſs without reſt, (whence you rather affect a reſt *from it*, than *in it* and *by it*); and laſtly, *Your continual bondage by the fear of death*, (which one would not dread,

dread, apprehending it only a removal into his preſence in whom I delight). All theſe things (which might have been diſtinctly inſiſted on, and more expreſly accommodated to the preſent purpoſe, but that I would not be over-tedious, and that ſomewhere elſe ſome or other of them may fall again in our way) do bring in *great and weighty additions* to the evil and guiltineſs of this ſin, and much tend to lay load upon it, to fill up its meaſure, even unto preſſing down and running over. For how juſt is it, to impute to it what it naturally cauſes, and lay its own impure and viperous births at its own door?

And though this Diſcourſe have been drawn out to a greater length than was intended, it will not be loſt labour, if by all that hath been ſaid, any that fear God ſhall be brought to apprehend more of the odiouſneſs of this ſin; and the *ſelf-indulgent thought* be baniſht far from them, that *this is either an indifferent matter*, or at leaſt (if it be ſomewhat a careleſs) 'tis *one of their more harmleſs inadvertencies and omiſſions.*

Which good effect, if through the bleſſing of God it may accompliſh, there will be the leſs need unto ſuch to read on, but take their nearer way to the immediate preſent *practice* of this great Duty. And becauſe alſo it is to be hoped, that the evil of this neglect once apprehended, will prompt and quicken ſerious and conſidering perſons to ſet upon the enjoined Duty; It will be the leſs neceſſary to enlarge much in that other kind

kind of Diſcourſe, which we now come to, *viz.*

II. 2. *Invitation thereunto.* Wherein yet we have reaſon to fear it may be too needful to place ſome part of our preſent labour. For though in matters of an infinitely inferior nature and concernment, any practice is readily undertaken that is once repreſented reaſonable and gainful; In ſuch a buſineſs as this, an hundred difficulties are imagined; we ſtand as perſons that cannot find their hands; and all the queſtion is, (even if there be ſome inclination to it, or conviction at leaſt it ſhould be done), *But how ſhall we go about it?* We are apt to grope as in the dark, even at noonday, and cannot find the door or way that leads into a *practice* wherein there is ſo much both of *pleaſantneſs* and *duty*. Therefore as the caſe is, the *Invitation* to this exerciſe ought, if it were poſſible, to be a kind of *manuduction*; and it is needful we be not only *called* and *preſt*, but even led into it. This then we are to endeavour, the giving of ſome *plain Preſcriptions*, that may put us into an eaſie and direct way of falling expeditely upon this delightful work.

And here it muſt be conſidered, that all (as hath been ſaid) are not in an equal diſpoſition to it; Some are more averſe, others leſs, but all too much; Therefore are we to begin as *low* as their caſe may require, who are *leſs diſpos'd*; and ſo proceeding on in our courſe, ſomewhat may fall in more ſutable to them who are in ſome diſpoſition to it, but

but do yet need (as who do not?) ſome help and furtherance in order thereto.

Firſt therefore, *It is neceſſary, that you do deliberately and reſolvedly deſign the thing it ſelf.* Propoſe to your ſelves *delighting in God* as a *buſineſs* unto which you will deſignedly and with ſtedfaſt purpoſe apply your whole Soul. Content not your ſelves with light roving thoughts about it, which many have about divers matters which they never think fit to engage themſelves in. Determine the matter fully in your own heart, and ſay, *Many projects I have tried in my time, ſundry things I have turn'd my mind unto, to little purpoſe, I will now, ſee what there is of delight to be found in God.* The ſloth and averſion of a backward heart muſt be overcome by *reſolution*; and that *reſolution* be well-weighed, deliberately taken up, deeply fixed, that it may laſt and overcome. And why ſhould you not be reſolved in this point? Is this a matter always to be waved? Know you another way to be happy? Are you yet to learn, that a reaſonable Soul needs the fulneſs of God to make it happy, and that there is no other God but one? Can there be any diſpute or doubt in the caſe, when there is but *one thing* to be done, beſides yeilding ones ſelf to be miſerable for ever? And what need of that, while yet there is *one way* to avoid it? Surely, *that there is but one*, is better than if there were a thouſand. You need not now be long in chuſing; nor do you need to deliberate, *becauſe of any doubt* in the caſe, but

that

that you may more fully comprehend in your own thoughts that there is none, and that your *reſolution* may hereupon grow the more *peremptory*, and ſecure from the danger of any change.

To talk of any difficulty in the matter, is a ſtrange impertinency; for who would oppoſe *difficulty* to *neceſſity*? or alledg, *the thing is hard* which *muſt be done*? Or muſt it be done, and never be attempted? or attempted, and not be reſolved upon? You have nothing to do to read further, who will not digeſt this *firſt counſel*, and here ſettle your reſolution, *I will apply my ſelf to a courſe of delight in God.* If this appear not reaſonable to you, deſpair that any thing will that follows. 'Tis fooliſh trifling, to look upon ſuch writings that profeſs their deſign, and have it in their fronts, that they are meant for *helps unto Chriſtian practice*, only with an humour of *ſeeing what a man can ſay.* And if ever you will be in earneſt, you muſt return to this point; And will but waſte time to no purpoſe, if you will not now ſet down your reſolution; that is, *That you will ſeek an happineſs for your Soul*, (too long already neglected!); an happineſs that may *ſatisfie* and *laſt*; And (where only it is to be found) in the *bleſſed God*; and *in him* by *ſetting your ſelves to delight in him*; ſince nothing can make you happy wherein you delight not. And that you will make uſe of what you further read, according as you find it conducing, and apt to ſerve your purpoſe herein. Then next,

2. Conſider your *preſent ſtate Godward. Muſt you*, do you ſee *you muſt* come to this point, of *having your delight in God?* In what poſture then are your affairs towards him? How do things ſtand between him and you? You do well know, you were unacceptable to him, and his enemy; and that his Juſtice and holy Nature obliged him to hold you as ſuch, (though he never gave you ground to think him implacable). Can you delight in an enemy? who (as matters in that caſe ſtand) muſt be apprehended ready to avenge himſelf on you, and as having whet his glittering Sword, and made the Arrow ready upon the ſtring, directed againſt your very heart? Apprehend this to *have been* your caſe, and moſt deſervedly, That you were an impure hateful wretch, deformed and loathſom, one that could yeild the holy God no matter of *delight*, full of enmity and contrariety to him, and in whom he could not but find much cauſe of moſt juſt hatred. Remember you were one of his revolted creatures, under his moſt deſerved wrath and curſe. Know at how vaſt a diſtance you were from *delighting in him*, or a ſtate that could admit of it. Conſider, Is this ſtill your caſe? And do not raſhly think it altered; or that you have nothing to do, but out of hand to ruſh upon the buſineſs of *delighting in God.*

3. Yet *do not think it unalterable.* Do not conclude it as a determined and undoubted thing, that matters can never be taken up

up between God and you, or you become ſutable and acceptable to him. Look not upon your vile wicked heart as unalterably wicked; nor upon him therefore as an irreconcilable enemy. Account he waits for your turning to him, as being inclin'd to friendſhip with you; Otherwiſe would vengeance have ſuffered you ſo long to live? Have you not been long at his mercy? Hath he not ſpared you, when it was in his power to cruſh you at pleaſure? Do not think therefore (what you have no pretence for) that he hath a deſtructive deſign upon you, and will accept of no atonement.

4. *Acquaint your ſelf with the way and terms upon which his Goſpel declares him reconcilable*; that is, that he will never be reconciled to you *while you remain wicked*, nor for *your own ſake*, become you *never ſo good*. That a more coſtly ſacrifice than you can either *procure* or *be*, muſt expiate your guilt, and make your peace. If this matter could have been effected in a leſs expenſive way, the *Son of God* had not (as you know he was) been *deſigned* himſelf, and *made* that ſacrifice; nor a work have been undertaken by him that might as well have been done by common hands. And ſince he ſubmitted and undertook as he did, reckon with your ſelf, how highly juſt it is, that the entire honour of ſo merciful condeſcenſion, and ſo great a performance, be wholly aſcribed to him. But withal know, he ſhed his blood, not in kindneſs *to your ſin*, but *to you*: And

that his deſign was at once to procure the death of that, and your life; That you need his Spirit as well as his Blood; *that* to recommend and reconcile you to his Holineſs, as well as *this* to his vindictive Juſtice; That as you expect ever to experience and taſte the *delights* of that communion, whereinto he calls you, you muſt not only *have the blood*
1 Joh. 17. *of Chriſt to cleanſe you from all ſin*, but muſt alſo *walk in the light, as he is in the light*; That an entire reſignation, a betruſting and ſubjecting of your ſelf to the mercy and governing power of the Redeemer, is neceſſary to the ſetting of things right between God and you; In whom only you may both accept God and be accepted of him; That he muſt be the center of union between God and you; and that union the ground of all delightful intercourſe.

5. *Make requeſt to him, that he would draw you into that union with his Son; unto whom*
Joh. 6. *none can come, but who are drawn by himſelf.*

Do not dream and ſlumber in this buſineſs; but know your *All* depends on it. Conſider the exigency of your caſe. Do you find your heart ſluggiſh and indiſpos'd to any ſuch tranſaction with God and Chriſt? Doth it decline and draw back? Know, it herein doth but act its own nature, and do as it is, or like it ſelf; Therefore ſtir up your
Iſa. 27. ſelf, *to take hold of his ſtrength*; in which way, if you have mind to be at peace, *you ſhall make peace.* Cry to him earneſtly, "Draw a poor

"poor wretch out of darkneſs and death, "that muſt otherwiſe be at eternal diſtance "from thee, and be miſerable for ever. Join "me to him who will bring me to thee, and "make me one for ever with thee. Here-upon,

6. *Accepting Jeſus Chriſt as thy Saviour and thy Lord; accept in him, with all humble reverence, thankfulneſs and admiration of divine mercy and goodneſs, the bleſſed God to be thy God; ſurrendring and yeilding up thy ſelf entirely and fully to be his for ever.* Do this unfainedly, and with great ſolemnity; And let it be to thee for an everlaſting memorial! Record it as a memorable day, wherein thou didſt go out of thy ſelf, and all finite, narrow, limited good, and paſs into union with the eternal, immenſe, incomprehenſible and all-comprehending good, and enter upon it as thine own! And what, wilt thou *delight* in a God that is not thine? Canſt thou be content to look wiſtly on him, as one unrelated and a ſtranger? Apprehend (and bleſs God that this is the ſtate of the caſe), that in this way he offers himſelf moſt *freely* to thee. It were aſtoniſhing to think of purchaſing ſo great a good! the matter were not to be offered at. But how tranſporting is it, that nothing but *acceptance* and *reſignation* ſhould be needful to make thee one with the great God, and make his fulneſs thine! Therefore make haſte to do this, and be not haſty in doing it. Defer not, but do it with great ſerioulneſs, deliberation, and fulneſs of conſent; conſi-

dering you are about to enter into an everlaſting Covenant not to to be forgotten; and doing a thing never to be again undone.

Now if herein your heart be ſincere, and there be a real and vital exerciſe of *your very Soul* in this tranſaction with God in Chriſt, ſo as that you truly take him for your God, preferring him in your eſtimation and choice above all things, and giving up your ſelf abſolutely and without reſervation to him as his, to be governed and diſpoſed of by him in all things at his pleaſure; You are hereby brought into that ſtate that doth admit of *delighting in him.*

And what remains to be ſaid, will concern you as perſons in a nearer capacity, and who have a kind of fundamental aptitude and diſpoſedneſs of heart unto this ſpiritual work; And will therefore be directed to you, conſidered according to that ſuppoſition.

Only it is withal to be conſidered, in the caſe of many ſuch, that they were arrived hither long ago, and been (as was before ſuppoſed) hereupon ſomewhat exerciſed and vers'd in this piece of holy practice, have had many pleaſant turns with God, and taſted often the *delights* of his converſe: But have diſcontinued their courſe, and are grown ſtrange to him who was their *delight*; have ſuffered themſelves by inſenſible degrees to be drawn and tempted away from him; or there hath been ſome groſſer and more violent rupture, by which they have broken them-

themſelves off. It will be requiſite to ſay ſomewhat more peculiar to theſe, (for the reducing of them again even to this unitive point); After which, what ſhall enſue, may in common concern them, and all that are arrived ſo far, together.

For ſuch therefore whoſe caſe this is, it will ſurely both become and concern you to take this courſe:

1. *Make a ſtand, and bethink your ſelves*; Can you juſtifie your carriage towards him whom you have taken to be your God? Can you approve your own way? Was this all that you oblig'd your ſelves unto in the day of your ſolemn Treaty with him; Only to take on you the Name of a Relation to him, and ſo (excepting that you would now and then complement him in ſome piece of external heartleſs homage) take leave till you meet again with him in another world? And that in the mean time this preſent world, or your carnal ſelf (to be gratified and ſerved out of it) ſhould really be your God, and He only bear the name? Was this indeed your meaning? Or if it was, did you deal ſincerely in that Treaty? Or can you think it was his meaning, and that he would expect no more from you? Can you allow your ſelves ſo to interpret his Covenant, and give this as the ſummary account of the tenor of it? How would you then expound it to nothing! And make a meer trifle of it! And make your Religion a fitter ſervice for an inanimate ſenſleſs Idol, than the living and

true God; Do you not yet know what the Name of God imports? Can he be a God to you that is not acknowledg'd by you as your very beſt, the univerſal, and abſolutely all-comprehending good? But if you apprehend there was really more in the matter; and that you have been altogether faulty in this thing. Then,

2. *Repreſent to your ſelves as fully as you can the greatneſs of the fault.* What have you made God an unneceſſary thing to you, while the Creature, your very Idols, lying vanities, were thought neceſſary? And theſe were the things upon which you thought fit to ſet your hearts! *Which you have loved, which you have ſerved, after which you have walked, which you have ſought, and whom you have worſhipt!* (The heap of expreſſions wherewith it ſeem'd meet to the Spirit of God to ſet out the profuſe laviſhneſs of Idolatrous affection). Think how monſtrous this is! Revolve in your own minds the ſeveral aggravations of your ſinful neglect before mentioned; and labour to feel the weight of them upon your own ſpirits; Think what time you have loſt from pleaſant *delightful walking with God!* What damage you have done your ſelves! How far you might have attained! How much you are caſt behind in your preparations for a bleſſed Eternity! What wrong you have done him, whom you took for the *God of your life*, to whom you vowed your hearts and ſouls! How little kindly and truly you have dealt with him!

Jer. 8. 2.

3. *Re-*

3. *Return to him with weeping and ſupplication.* Open your ſelves freely to him. Let him hear you *bemoaning your ſelves*, pour out your Souls to him, in large acknowledgments and confeſſions of your guiltineſs; which, while you keep ſilence, will conſume your bones and waſte you to nothing. *Remember whence you are fal'n, and repent and do your firſt works.* Till Rev. 2. then, *He hath this againſt you, that you have left your firſt love.* And conſider, Is it not a grievous thing to you? Doth it not pain your hearts, that your Lord and Redeemer ſhould have *ſomewhat againſt you* (as it were laid up, noted, and put on record, kept in ſtore, and (as himſelf remarkably expreſſes it, *(ſealed up* Deut. 32. *among his treaſures)*; ſomewhat that ſticks with him, and which he bears in mind, and hath lying in his heart againſt you? Is this a ſmall thing with you? when that muſt be apprehended to be his *ſenſe* (and ſuppoſe him ſaying to you) *I remember the kindneſs of thy* Jer. 2. *youth, the love of thine eſpouſals* --- And now ſince thoſe former days, *What iniquity haſt thou found in me, that thou art gone far from me, and haſt walked after vanity, and art become vain?* How confounding a thing were it, if he ſhould ſay, as ſometime to others in a caſe reſembling yours (and why ſhould you not take it as equally belonging to you)? *O my* Mic. 6. 3. *people, What have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? teſtifie againſt me:* And while the *caſe admits* ſuch ſharp and cutting rebuke, and that it is the *matter of rebuke* (not rebuke it ſelf abſtracted from the matter, *i. e.*

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if it were cauſleſs) that ſhould ſmart or wound; How becoming is it! and ſutable to the caſe, to caſt down a wounded bleeding heart before the Lord, and be abaſed in the duſt at the footſtool of his Mercy-ſeat! And though your ſin be great and hainous;

4. Yet apprehend you are before a *Mercy-Seat*; That *there is forgiveneſs with him that he may be feared.* How would this apprehenſion promote the humiliation which the caſe requires! A ſullen deſpondency that excludes hope of mercy hardens the heart; continues the ſinful comfortleſs diſtance: Therefore apply your ſelves to him; ſeek his Pardon in the Blood of the Redeemer; know you need it, and that it is only upon ſuch terms to be obtained.

Yet alſo take heed leſt any diminiſhing thoughts of the evil of your ſin return, and make you neglect the *thing*, or wave the known ſtated *way* of remiſſion. We are apt to look upon crimes whereby *men are immediately offended*, (and which therefore are of worſe reputation *among men*), as robbery, murder, *&c.* as very horrid. This is a matter that lies immediately between *Spirit* and *Spirit*; the God of the Spirits of all fleſh and your Spirit. You have had a ſolemn tranſaction with him, and have dealt falſly: And though the matter were ſecret between God and you, Is it the leſs evil *in it ſelf* for that? If you had dealt unworthily, and uſed baſe treachery towards a friend, in a matter only known to him and your ſelf, Would you not when

when you have reflected, bluſh to ſee his face, till matters be compoſed betwixt you? And is there another way of having them compoſed, and of reſtoring *delightful* friendly converſe, than by your ſeeking his Pardon, and his granting it? Could you have the confidence to put your ſelf upon converſing with him as at former times, without ſuch a preface? Or were it not great immodeſty and impudence to offer at it? But that when this hath been the caſe between the bleſſed God and you, and you now come with deep reſentments, and ſerious unfeigned acknowledgments of your moſt offenſive neglects of him, to ſeek forgiveneſs at his hand, he ſhould be eaſie and facile to forgive; How ſhould this melt you down before him! And this is what his own word obliges you to apprehend and believe of him. *Theſe words* He hath required to *be pro-* Jer. 3. 12.
claimed to you; *Return you back-ſliding ones, and I will not cauſe mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, ſaith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledg your* v. 13.
iniquity, that you have tranſgreſſed againſt the Lord your God, and have ſcattered your ways to the ſtrangers under every green tree (your offence hath been Idolatry as well as theirs); *Turn, O backſliding Children, ſaith the Lord; for I am married unto you* ---

What heart would not break and bleed at this overture! You can be recovered to no capacity of *delighting in God*, as heretofore, till you ſenſibly feel the need of great forgiveneſs, and have a diſpoſition of heart inwardly

wardly to reliſh the ſweetneſs and pleaſantneſs of it; Till thoſe words do agree with the ſenſe of your hearts, and you can (as in a tranſport) cry out, *O the bleſſedneſs of the*
Pſal. 32. 1. *man* (as the expreſſion imports) *whoſe iniquity is forgiven, and whoſe ſin is covered*! &c. And now when you are come thus far, if the temper of your Spirit be right even in this, there will be in conjunction with the deſire, hope and value of forgiveneſs, at leaſt an equal dread of ſuch future ſtrangeneſſes and breaches between God and you: And that will be very natural to you, which I next add as further advice;

5. *Moſt earneſtly ſeek and crave a better and more fixed temper of ſpirit*; More fully determined and bent Godward; That *your heart*
2 Theſ. 3. 5. *may be directed into the love of God*; That *the ſpirit of love, power, and a ſound mind may bear rule in you.* Be intent upon the recovery of that healthy ſoundneſs, which whereſoever it hath place, will with a certain ſteady power, and a ſtrong inclining bent of love, carry your heart toward God. And take heed leſt you be ſatisfied in the expectation and hope of forgiveneſs, as to your former neglects of God, without this.

There is a manifeſt prejudice daily accrewing to the Chriſtian name and profeſſion, by the unequal eſtimation which that part of the Doctrine of Chriſt hath, that concerns the *work of his Spirit upon us, regeneration*, the *new creature, repentance*, and an *holy life*; in compariſon of that which concerns *his performances*

formances and *acquiſitions for us*, *expiation of ſin*, *ſatisfaction of Divine Juſtice*, *forgiveneſs* and *acceptance with God*. How ſweet raviſhing tranſporting Doctrines, and how *pure Goſpel* are theſe *latter* accounted by many, who eſteem the former cold, ſapleſs, unpleaſant notions! Thence comes Chriſtian Religion to look with ſo diſtorted a face and aſpect, as if it ſuffered a convulſion, that hath altered and diſguiſed it unto that degree, that it is hardly to be known; being made to ſeem as if it imported only a *deſign to reſcue ſome perſons from Divine Wrath and Juſtice, without ever giving them that diſpoſition of heart which is neceſſary both to their ſerving of God and their bleſſedneſs in him.* This is not to be imputed ſo much to the miſrepreſentation made of it by them, whoſe buſineſs it hath been to inſtruct others, (though of them *too many* may have been very faulty in almoſt ſuppreſſing or inſiſting leſs, or very little, upon Doctrines of the former ſtrain, while the ſtream of their Diſcourſes hath moſtly run upon the other); for it muſt be acknowledged, that by very many in our age, the abſolute neceſſity of the great heart-change hath been both moſt clearly repreſented, and as urgently preſt as perhaps in moſt that have gone before. But the matter is plainly to be moſt attributed to that depravedneſs of mans nature, whence there is a moſt unequal and partial reception of the Truth of God; and that which ſeems (taken apart by it ſelf) to import more of *indulgence to ſinners* is readily catcht at, that which

which more directly *ſtrikes at the very root of ſin*, is let paſs as if it had never been ſpoken. And ſo men *make up to themſelves* a Goſpel of this tenor and import, *That let the temper of their ſpirits towards God be what it will, if they rely and reſt upon the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, God will be reconciled to them.* And they think they need take no further care. But whatever is ſaid in the Goſpel *of Chriſt* beſides, of the neceſſity of *being born of God*, of *partaking a Divine nature*, of *putting off the old man*, and *putting on the new*, &c. is lookt upon as if it had been thrown in by chance, and did ſignifie nothing. And the other, without this, is thought to be *pure Goſpel*; As if *theſe* were impertinent additions and falſifications. But will not ſuch men underſtand, that the detracting of any thing from the Inſtrument or Teſtament of a man, as well as adding thereto, makes it *another thing*, and none of his *act* or *deed*? And ſo that their *pure Goſpel*, as they call it, is *another Goſpel*, nay (becauſe there cannot be another) *no Goſpel*? Or will they not underſtand, how *ſimply impoſſible it is*, in the very *nature of the thing*, that the end ſhould be attained, of bringing men to bleſſedneſs, (*i. e.* to a *delightful reſt in God*), without their having a *new nature*, an heart inclined and bent toward God, wrought to a conformity and agreement with Gods own holy Nature and Will, unto which the offer and hope of forgiveneſs by the Blood of Chriſt is deſigned to win and form them? For can men be happy

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in him in whom they take no delight? or delight in him to whom the very temper of their ſpirits is habitually unſutable and repugnant? How plain are things to them that are not reſolved *not to ſee!*

Wherefore beware of contenting your ſelves with the meer hope, that upon your having admitted a conviction, and felt ſome regret in your ſpirits for former ſtrangeneſs to God, you ſhall be pardoned; ſo as thereupon never to deſign a redreſs, but run on the ſame courſe as before: And when you have hereby contracted a new ſcore, and the load of your guilt begins to be ſenſibly heavy upon you, then betake your ſelves to God for a new pardon. What preſumptuous trifling is this with the Lord of Heaven and Earth! And what do you mean by it, or ſeem to expect? Is it not, that God ſhould inſtead of remitting your ſin to you remit your duty; cancel the obligation of that very ſupream univerſal fundamental Law of Nature it ſelf, and excuſe you quite from ever loving, delighting in him, or ſetting your heart upon him at all? Think not forgiveneſs alone then will ſerve your turn; it will ſignifie as much as a pardon will do to a Malefactor juſt ready to dye of a mortal diſeaſe; he, poor man! as much needs a *skilful Phyſician*, as a *merciful Prince*; And ſo do you. And your matter is nothing the worſe (ſure), that the perſon of each is ſuſtained by the ſame Jeſus, and that both parts can be performed by the ſame hand. And know, that a *reſtored rectitude*

tude of Spirit Godward, a *renewed healthineſs* and ſoundneſs of heart, with your *actual delighting in God* thereupon in your future courſe, ſtands in *nearer* and more immediate connexion with your final perfect delightful reſt and bleſſedneſs in him, than your being perpetually forgiven the not-doing of it; if *this* were ſuppoſed poſſible without *that*; But it is not indeed ſuppoſable, for if God would not therefore hereafter baniſh you his preſence (as now he does not), you would for ever baniſh your ſelves, as now you do.

6. *Let there be a ſolemn recognition and renewal of your engagement and devoting of your ſelf to God.* Again take hold of his Covenant, and ſee that it take faſter hold of you. Do it as if you had never done it, as if you were now to begin with him; only that *your own ſin* and *his grace* ought now to appear greater in your eyes; *that* more odious, that you have added *treachery* to *diſaffection*; *this* more glorious and admirable, that yet he hath left open to you a door of hope, and that there is *place for repentance*, and that he is ready to treat with you again on a new ſcore. With what humility, ſhame, fear and trembling, diſtruſt of your ſelf, reſolution of future more diligent circumſpection and obſervation of your own ſpirit, truſt and dependence on *his*, ought this tranſaction now to be managed with the holy God!

And when you are thus returned into the way and courſe of your duty; Then may what follows concern you in common with all other,

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that (being entered) deſire direction how to proceed and improve in this holy Exerciſe of Delighting in God.

Becauſe therefore ſuch as have been ſomewhat practiſed in this courſe, and being convinc't of the equity and excellency of it, deſire to make progreſs therein, do yet find a difficulty in it; it goes not eaſily with them, they are eaſily diverted and can hardly hold on in it; ſomewhat is intended to be ſaid, that poſſibly may, through the Lords bleſſing be of ſome uſe, as to that (too-common) caſe.

1. *Firſt then, Let it be your great ſtudy and endeavour to get a temper of mind actually, ordinarily and more entirely ſpiritual.* We ſuppoſe the implantation of ſome holy and ſpiritual Principles in you already; But that is not enough. For as a mind *wholly carnal*, only ſavours the things of the fleſh, will perpetually withdraw and recoil, if you offer it any thing tending God-ward; ſo, *in whatſoever degree it is carnal*, it will do thus in a proportionable degree. If you ſay, *let me now apply my ſelf to ſome delightful intercourſe with God*, while an earthly tincture is freſh with you, and it was ſome carnal thing that made the laſt impreſſion upon your ſpirit, many excuſes will be found out, there will be manifold diverſions; It will never be thought ſeaſonable. Many other things will be judged neceſſary to be minded firſt.

Wherefore fence againſt the addictedneſs of your hearts to thoſe *other things*. And whereas, through the great advantages that ſenſible

things have upon your ſenſes and imagination, you are in continual danger to be over-born and held off from God; This you muſt earneſtly intend to watch and fortifie thoſe *inlets*, and not to give away your ſouls to ſenſe and the things of ſenſe. Truſt not your ſenſes and their objects to parly, but under ſtrict inſpection. Never ſuffer that they ſhould let in upon you what is ſutable and grateful to them at their own pleaſure.

You need to have ſomewhat elſe than ſenſe, even a *ſpirit of might and power*, that may counter-mand and over-rule in every of thoſe ports, and *turn the battle in the gate.* Thoſe uſe to be the places of moſt ſtrength; and ſurely here there needs moſt. Your caſe and preſent ſtate cannot admit that you ſecurely give up your ſelves to unmixed unſolicitous *delight* even in the beſt Object. If you intermit *care* and *vigilancy*, you will ſoon have ſuch things come in upon you, as will make a *worſe mixture* in your *delight* than *they* can do, and corrupt and ſpoil all. Your *delight* were better to be mixed with *holy care*, than with *ſinful vanity*; *that* tends to preſerve, *this* utterly to deſtroy it. Your ſtate is that of conflict and warfare: You muſt be content with ſuch ſpiritual *delight*, as will conſiſt with this ſtate. In a time of War and Danger, when a City is beſet with a ſurrounding Enemy, and all the Inhabitants are to be intent upon common Safety, their caſe will not admit, that they ſhould *entirely* indulge themſelves to eaſe and pleaſure: And ſurely it is better to bear the incon-

inconvenience of Watching and Guarding themſelves, and enjoy the comforts which a rational probability of Safety by ſuch means will allow them, than meerly with the mad hope of procuring themſelves an opportunity and vacancy for freer *delights*, to throw open their Gates, and permit themſelves and all their *delectable* things to the rapine & ſpoil of a mercileſs Enemy: Underſtand this to be your caſe. Therefore ſtrictly guard all the avenues of your inward man. It is better reſiſt *there* and combate your Enemy, than within your Walls; who is more eaſily *kept* than *driven* out. *There* cauſe every occaſion and object (even that *importunes* and *pretends buſineſs* to you) to make a ſtand, and diligently examine the errand. Let alſo for this purpoſe *a ſpirit of Wiſdom and Judgment* reſide here, (*The Gate* was wont to be the place of *counſel* and *judgment*, as well as *ſtrength*), that may prudently conſider what is to be entertained and what not; and determine and do accordingly. But if *you will have no rule over your own ſpirit, but let it be as a City broken down and without walls*; If you will live careleſs and at eaſe, and think in this way to have *delight in God*, your *delight* will ſoon find other Objects, and grow like that of the Swine wallowing in the mire, become ſenſual, impure, and at length turn all to Gall and Wormwood. Prov. 25. 28.

It may be you have known ſome of much pretence to Piety, that would allow themſelves the liberty of being otherwiſe very plea-

ſant in their uſual converſation; by which you may imagine *delight in God* (which you cannot ſuppoſe ſuch perſons unacquainted with) may fairly conſiſt with *another ſort of delight*. Nor indeed is it to be doubted but it may; For the Rules and Meaſures which the Holy God hath ſet us import *no ſuch rigorous ſeverity*, nor do confine us to ſo very narrow bounds, but that there is ſcope and latitude enough left unto the ſatisfaction of ſober deſires and inclinations that are of a meaner kind. He that hath adjoined the inferior faculties we find in our ſelves to our natures, and at firſt created a terreſtrial Paradiſe for innocent man, never intended to forbid the gratification of thoſe faculties, nor hath given us any reaſon to doubt but that the lower *delights* that are ſutable to them *might be* innocently entertained; Nay, and the very Rules themſelves of Temperance and Sobriety which he hath given us, for the guiding and governing of ſenſitive deſires, do plainly imply, that they are permitted. For that which ought not *to be*, is not to be *regulated*, but deſtroyed: But then, whereas ſuch *rules* do ſo limit the inclinations and functions of the low *animal* life, as that they may be *conſiſtent* with our end, and *ſubſervient* to it; How perverſe and wicked an indulgence to them were it, to oppoſe them at once both to the Authority of him that ſet us thoſe Rules, and (therein) to our very end it ſelf! That *delectation* in the things of this lower world, which is not by the Divine Law forbidden and declared *evil*, either

either in it ſelf, or *by the undue meaſure*, ſeaſon, or other circumſtances thereof, is abundantly ſufficient for our entertainment, and the gratification of this groſſer part, while we are in this our earthly pilgrimage; and *ſo much* can never hurt us, nor hinder our higher *delights*. God hath fenc'd and hedg'd them in for us (as a Garden incloſed) by his own Rules and Laws ſet about them; ſo that we cannot prejudice or empair them, but by breaking thorough his incloſure. Our great care and ſtudy therefore muſt be, to repreſs and mortifie all earthly and ſenſual inclinations, unto that degree as till they be reduc't to a conformity and agreement with his Rules and Meaſures; unto which they who have no regard, and do yet pretend highly to ſpirituality, and *delight in God*, 'Tis apparently nothing elſe but meer hollow pretence; they only put on a good face, and make a fair ſhew; look big, and ſpeak great ſwelling words of vanity, as they muſt be called, while their hearts taſte nothing of what their tongues utter. Spiritual *delight* and *joy* is a ſevere thing, ſeparated from vain and unbecoming levities, as well as from all earthly impurities; and only grows and flouriſhes in a Soul that is dead to this world, and alive to God through Jeſus Chriſt.

See then to the uſual temper of your ſpirit; and do not think it enough, that you hope the great renewing change did ſomtime paſs upon it; and that therefore your caſe is good and ſafe, and you may now take your eaſe and li-

berty: But be intent upon this, to get into a *confirmed growing ſpirituality*, and that you may find you are in your ordinary courſe *af-*
Rom. 8. 5. *ter the Spirit*; then will you *ſavour the things of the Spirit*; And then eſpecially will the
Pſal. 43. bleſſed God himſelf become your *great delight*, and your *exceeding joy*. Retire yourſelf from this world, draw off your mind and heart. This is Gods great rival. The friendſhip of
Jam. 4. 4. this world *is enmity to him*, which is elſe-
Rom. 8. 7. where ſaid of the *carnal mind*; that is indeed the ſame thing, *viz.* a *mind that is over-friendly affected towards this world*, or not chaſtly; wherefore alſo in that fore-mentioned Scripture, they that are ſuppoſed and ſuſpected to have made themſelves, in that undue ſenſe, *friends of this world*, are beſpoken under the names of Adulterers and Adultereſſes. You muſt caſt off all other Lovers, if you intend *delighting in God*. Get up then into the higher region where you may be out of the danger of having your ſpirit ingulpht, and as it were, ſuck't up of the ſpirit of this world; or of being ſubject to its debaſing, ſtupifying influence. Bear your ſelf as the inhabitant of another country. Make this your mark and ſcope, that the temper of your ſpirit may be ſuch, that the ſecret of the Divine Preſence may become to you as your very element, wherein you can moſt freely breath and live, and be moſt at eaſe; and out of which you may perceive you cannot enjoy your ſelf; and that what-ever tends to withdraw you from him, any extravagant motion,

motion, the beginnings of the excurſion, or the leaſt departing ſtep, may be ſenſibly painful and grievous to you. And do not look upon it as an hopeleſs thing you ſhould ever come to this; ſome have come to it; *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the Houſe of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple.* Pſal. 27. 4.

Nor was this a tranſient fit only with the Pſalmiſt, but we find him frequently ſpeaking the ſame ſenſe, *Surely goodneſs and mercy ſhall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the Houſe of the Lord for ever,* And again we have the like ſtrains; *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord God of Hoſts! My Soul longeth; yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord: Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy Houſe,* &c. And what was this Houſe more to him than another Houſe, ſave that here he reckoned upon enjoying the Divine Preſence? So that here was an heart ſo naturaliz'd to this Preſence, as to affect *an abode in it*, and that he might *lead his life with God*, and dwell with him all his days; He could not be content with giving a viſit now and then. Pſal. 23. 6. Pſal. 84.

And why ſhould this temper of ſpirit in the clearer light of the Goſpel be look't upon as an unattainable thing? A lazy deſpondency, and the *mean* conceit, that it is modeſt not to aim ſo high, ſtarves Religion, and ſtifles all truly noble and generous deſires. Let this then be the thing deſigned with you, and conſtantly purſue and drive the deſign, that you

may get into this diſpoſition of ſpirit towards God. His Spirit will not be reſtrained, if it be duly ſought, and dutifully comply'd with and obeyed; if you carefully reſerve your
Pſal. 4. ſelf for him, as one *whom he hath ſet apart for himſelf.* If you will be entirely his, and keep your diſtance, uſing an holy chaſt reſervedneſs as to other things; that is, ſuch things as any way tend to indiſpoſe your ſpirit towards him, or render it leſs ſutable to his converſe, He will be no ſtranger to you.

And that it may be more ſutable and fit for him, you ſhould habituate and accuſtom your ſelf to converſe *in the general* with *ſpiritual things.* You will be as the things are you converſe moſt with; they will leave their ſtamp and impreſs on you; *wandring after vanity*, you will *become vain*; *minding earthly things*, you will *become earthly*; Accordingly, being much taken up with *ſpiritual things*, you will bear their image, and become ſpiritual.

Think how unworthy it is, ſince you have faculties (and thoſe now refined and improved by Divine light and grace) that are capable of being employed about ſo much higher objects than thoſe of ſenſe, That you ſhould yeild to a confinement, in ſo great part, to ſo low and mean things; whence it is, that when you ſhould mind things of an higher nature, 'tis a *ſtrange work* with you, and thoſe things ſeem odd and uncouth to you, and are all with you as meer *ſhadow* and *darkneſs*, that you ſhould be moſt familiar with.

with. Urge on your ſpirit; make it *enter* into the inviſible world. May you not be *aſſured*, if you will uſe your underſtanding, That there are things you never ſaw, that are unſpeakably more excellent and glorious than any thing you have ſeen, or than can be ſeen by eyes of fleſh?

Why ſhould your mind and thoughts be limited within the narrow bounds of this ſublunary world; ſo ſmall and minute, and (by the apoſtacy and ſin of man) ſo abject and deformed a part of Gods Creation? Do not bind down your ſpirit to the conſideration and view of the affairs and concernments only of this Region of ſin and wretchedneſs; where few things fall under your notice, that can be a comfortable (or ſo greatly edifying and inſtructive a) proſpect to a ſerious ſpirit. But conſider, That as certainly as you behold with your eyes the wickedneſs and miſeries of this forlorn world, that hath forſaken God, and is in great part forſaken of him; ſo certainly, there is a vaſtly greater world than this, of glorious and innocent Creatures, that ſtand in direct and dutiful ſubordination to their common Maker and Lord; loving, and beloved of him; delighting to do his will, and ſolacing themſelves perpetually in his bleſſed preſence, and in the mutual love, communion and felicity of one another. Unto which happy number (or *innumerable company* rather as they are called) the Redeemer is daily adjoining ſuch as he recovers and tranſlates out of the ruins Heb. 12.

and

and deſolation of this miſerable accurſed part of the Univerſe.

Reckon your ſelf as ſomeway appertaining to that bleſſed Society. Mind the affairs thereof as thoſe of your own Country, and that properly belong to you. When we are taught to pray, *That the will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven*; Can it be ſuppoſed, it ought to be a ſtrange thing to our thoughts, *how affairs go there?* Surely Faith and holy Reaſon, well uſed, would furniſh us with regular and warrantable notions enough of the ſtate of things above, that we ſhould not need to carry it as perſons that have no concern therein; or, when we are required to be as ſtrangers on earth, that we ſhould make our ſelves ſuch to heaven rather.

Let your mind be much employed in conſidering the ſtate of things between God and his Creatures. Deſign a large field for your thoughts to ſpread themſelves in, (and you will alſo find it a fruitful one); let them run backward and forward, and expatiate on every ſide. Think how all things ſprang from God, and among them Man, that excellent part of this his lower Creation; what he was towards God, and what he is now become. Think of the admirable perſon, the glorious excellences, the mighty deſign, the wonderful atchievements and performances of the Redeemer; And the bleſſed iſſue he will bring things to at length.

Think of, and ſtudy much the nature, parts and accompliſhments of the new creature; get

get your mind well-inſtructed and furniſhed with apprehenſions of the whole entire frame of that holy rectitude wherein the Image of God upon renewed Souls doth conſiſt; the ſeveral lovely ornaments of the hidden man of the heart, how it is framed and habited, when it is as it ſhould be towards God and towards men. Caſt about, and you will not want matter of ſpiritual employment and exerciſe for your minds and hearts; nor have occaſion, if any expoſtulate with you, *why you mind this earth and the things of ſenſe ſo much*, to ſay, *you know not what elſe to think of*; you may ſure find many things elſe. And if you would uſe your thoughts to ſuch converſe, and thus daily entertain your ſelf, In this way you may expect a ſpiritual frame to grow habitual to you; and then would the reſt of your buſineſs do it ſelf. You would not need to be preſt and perſwaded to *delight in God*, any more than to do the acts of Nature, to *eat*, and *drink*, and *move*, yea and *draw your breath.*

2. *Endeavour your knowledg, or the conception you have of God, may be more diſtinct and clear.* For obſerve whether when you would apply your ſelf to *delight in him*, this be not the next (or at leaſt one) great obſtruction after that of an indiſpoſed carnal heart, That though *you would, and you know 'tis fit you ſhould do ſo, you know not how to go about it; for you are at a loſs, what or how to conceive of him.* But is it fit it ſhould be always thus? What, ever learning and never arrive to this

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knowledg? 'Tis moſt true, *We can never ſearch out the Almighty unto perfection*; And it will always be but a little portion we ſhall know of that glorious incomprehenſible Being: But ſince there is a *knowledg of God*, we are required to have our Souls furniſht with, and whereon eternal life depends, with all gracious diſpoſitions of heart towards him, that are the beginnings of that life; Certainly the whole compaſs of our Duty and Bleſſedneſs is not all laid upon an Impoſſibility; And therefore, if we do not *ſo far* know as to *love* and *delight in him* above all things elſe, this muſt be through our own great default; and more to be imputed to our careleſneſs and contentedneſs to be ignorant, than that he is *unknowable*, or hath ſo reſerved and ſhut up himſelf from us that we *cannot* know him. There are many things belonging to the Being of God which we are not concerned to know, and which it would be a vain and bold curioſity to pry into: But what is neceſſary to direct or practiſe, and tends to ſhew how we ſhould be and carry our ſelves towards him, is not (ſuch hath been his gracious vouchſafement) impoſſible or difficult to be known. We may apprehend him to be the moſt excellent Being; and may deſcend to many particular excellencies, wherein we may eaſily apprehend him infinitely to ſurpaſs all other Beings.

For we moſt certainly know, *all things were of him*, and therefore, that whatſoever excellency we can obſerve in creatures, muſt be emi-

eminently and in higheſt perfection in Him, without the want of any thing, but what doth it ſelf import weakneſs and imperfection; And hath it not been His errand & buſineſs into the world, *who lay in his boſom to declare him*? And hath not he, *who at ſundry times and in divers manners ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the Prophets, in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the worlds, who is the brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon?* He hath been on earth the viſible Repreſentation of God to men; The Divine Glory ſhone in him; *The glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth*; Was not that Divine? Joh. 1. 18. Joh. 1. 14.

Suppoſe we then, we had ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh, and been the conſtant obſervers of his whole converſation on earth, (and though we have not ſeen it, we have the ſufficient Records of his Life and Actions in our hands); Let us I ſay ſuppoſe him from day to day before our eyes, in all his meek, humble, lovely deportments among men; and withal in the beams of Majeſty that appeared through that vail wherein he was pleaſed to inwrap himſelf: If we did obſerve him going to and fro, and every where doing good, ſcattering bleſſings wherever he went; with what compaſſion and tenderneſs he healed the ſick, inſtructed the ignorant, ſupplied and fed the hungry and neceſſitous; how he bare with the weak, forgave the injurious (even againſt his own life), and wept over ſecure and obſti-

obſtinate ſinners; with what mighty power he caſt out Devils, raiſed the dead, commanded Winds and Seas, and they obeyed him; with what authority, zeal and conviction he conteſted againſt an hypocritical generation of hardened, impenitent, unbelieving wretches, caſting flames of holy juſt diſpleaſure in their faces, and threatning them with the damnation of Hell: And now ſuppoſe the veil laid aſide, and the luſtre of all theſe excellencies ſhining forth, without the interpoſition of any obſcuring cloud or ſhadow; And ſuch a one is the bleſſed God. For this was the *expreſs Image of his Perſon*; and as he himſelf tells us, Joh. 14. 9. *They that have ſeen Him, have ſeen the Father.* And do you not now ſee one to be *delighted in?*

But yet further, Can you not frame a notion of Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice, Holineſs, Truth, Power, with other known Perfections, all concurring together in a Being purely Spiritual (not obvious to our ſenſe), and that was Eternally and Originally of Himſelf, the Author and Original of all things, and who is therefore over all and in all, infinite and unchangeable in all the perfections beforementioned? Surely ſuch conceptions are not impoſſible to you? And this is He in whom you are to *delight.*

Lift up then your minds above your ſenſes and all ſenſible things; uſe your underſtandings, whereby you are diſtinguiſht from brute creatures. Conſider, this is he from whom you and all things ſprang, and in whom your life

life is. Do you perceive life, wiſdom, power, love in other things; theſe muſt all have ſome or other fountain. Other things have not theſe of themſelves, for they are not of themſelves, therefore they muſt derive and partake them from him; and thence it is evident, they muſt be in him in their higheſt excellency. Of this, your underſtandings, duly exerciſed, will render you as ſure, as if you ſaw that infinite glory, in which all theſe meet, with your eyes; and will aſſure you, 'tis ſo much more excellent and glorious, for that it cannot be ſeen with your eyes. You ſee the external acts and expreſſions of theſe things from ſuch creatures as you are: But life, wiſdom, power, love themſelves are inviſible things, which in themſelves you *cannot ſee*; yet you are not the leſs certain that there are ſuch things. And do you not find, that the certain evidence you have, that theſe things meet in this or that creature, do render it lovely and delightful in your eyes? eſpecially, if you have, or apprehend you may have neareſt intereſt in ſuch a creature? The bleſſed God not only hath theſe things in himſelf, but is theſe very things himſelf; therefore muſt be *inviſible*, as they are; And becauſe he not only hath them, but is them, therefore they are in him perfectly unchangeably and eternally, as being his very Eſſence. Think then of a Being that is pure, original, ſubſtantial, *life*, *wiſdom*, *power*, *love*; And how infinitely amiable and delectable ſhould that ever bleſſed Being be unto you!

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Converſe with the Word of God. Read his deſcriptions of Himſelf; And do not content your ſelves to have the words and expreſſions before your eyes, or in your mouths, that repreſent to you his Nature and Attributes; but make your pauſes, and conſider the things themſelves ſignify'd by them; that is, when you read ſuch paſſages of his own holy Book, as that which tells you his name, that
Exod. 34. *He is the Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful*, &c. Or that tell you *He is light, He is love, He is God only wiſe, He is the Almighty, God all-ſufficient, He is all in all*, and that the *Heavens, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Him*; Or wherein you find him admired as *glorious in Holineſs*; Or that ſay, *He is what He is*, that *He is the firſt and the laſt*, the *Alpha and Omega*, &c. Labour to fix the apprehenſion and true import of all ſuch expreſſions deep in your mind; that you may have an entire and well-formed repreſentation of him before you, unto which you may upon all occaſions have recourſe, and not be at a loſs every time you are to apply your ſelves to any converſe with him, what or how to conceive of him.

And becauſe meer words, though they may furniſh you with a more full and comprehenſive notion of him, yet it may be not with ſo *lively* a one, or that you find ſo powerfully ſtriking your heart, compare with that account his Word gives you of him, the Works which your eyes may daily behold, and which you are aſſured were wrought

and

and done by him. To read or hear of his Wiſdom, Power, Goodneſs, *&c.* and then to have the viſible effects within your conſtant view, that ſo fully correſpond to what his Word hath ſaid of him, and demonſtrate him to be what you were told he is; How mighty a confirmation doth this carry with it! You may behold ſomewhat of him in every creature. All his Works do not only repreſent, but even praiſe and commend him to you.

Above all, ſince he is only to be ſeen in his own light, pray earneſtly and continually to the *God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, that he would give you the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledg of him.* Eph. 1. From ſuch as ſo deſire to know him, he will not conceal himſelf. This is your more direct *following on to know the Lord*; in which caſe he hath ſaid, *you ſhall know*, and *that his going forth ſhall be prepared as the morning.* Hoſ. 6. By your craving looks, and the expecting poſture of your waiting eye, you draw forth and invite his enlightening communications, which do but wait for an invitation. For it is moſt reaſonable you ſhould feel your want, and expreſs your deſire of what is ſo precious, before you find it. Hereby you put your ſelves amidſt the glorious beams of his vital pleaſant light; or do open your Souls to admit and let it in upon you. Who when he finds it is with you a *deſired thing* and longed for, takes more pleaſure in imparting, than you can pains in ſeeking, or pleaſure in receiving it.

Nor yet, when you have thus attained to ſome competent meaſure of the knowledg of God, are you to ſatisfie your ſelves that now you are not altogether ignorant: But,

3. *Imploy your knowledg in frequent and ſolemn thinking on him*; which is one (and the next) *end* of that knowledg, and a further great *means* to your *delighting in him.* Your knowledg of God ſignifies little to this purpoſe, or any other, if, as it gives you the advantage of having frequent actual thoughts of him, it be not *uſed to this end. Not having this knowledg*, when you would ſet your ſelves ſeriouſly to think on God, you are loſt in the dark, and know not which way to turn your ſelves; And *having it*, you will be as much ſtrangers to *delight in him*, if you let your knowledg lye bound up in dead and ſpiritleſs notion, and labour not to have it turned into active life and fervent love, by the agitation of your working thoughts. By your muſing this fire muſt be kindled. Do you ſuppoſe it poſſible, to *delight* in God and not *think* of him? If God be the ſolace and joy of your Souls, ſurely it muſt be *God remembered* and minded much, not neglected and forgotten.

Pſal. 63. *My ſoul* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) *ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs, and my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-*

Pſal. 104. 34. *watches.* And he at the ſame time ſays *his meditation of him ſhall be ſweet*, when he ſays *he will be glad in the Lord.*

'Tis not a brutal delight you are here invited

vited to. Even ſuch creatures have their Pleaſures alſo; and do need thereto, beſides a ſutable object, only the help and miniſtry of their ſenſes. Your *delight in God* can find no way into your hearts, but by the introduction of your exerciſed minds. There the matter muſt be prepared and form'd, by which your *delight* is to be nouriſh'd & maintained. Hereto then you muſt apply your ſelves with deſign, and with ſerious diligence, and take pains with your recoiling thoughts. Do not make that fulſom pretence, to excuſe your ſlothful neglect, that you cannot command your own thoughts. The thing it ſelf is unqueſtionably true, and that you are not of your ſelves ſufficient to think any thing that is good, as of your ſelves; and ſo you may truly enough ſay, that you cannot think any thought at all without God. or ſo much as draw a breath. Only, as beſides your natural dependence on God for the ſupport of your natural life and being, there muſt be that courſe taken, and thoſe things done, by which in an orderly courſe of Providence you may live; ſo for the maintaining of your ſpiritual life (which very much ſtands in delight and joy in God) you muſt join a ſpiritual dependence for that ſpecial influence and concurrence which is neceſſary hereto, with the doing of ſuch things as by Gods appointment and preſcription are to ſerve this end. They who complain therefore they cannot attain to it, to *delight in God*, or their *delight in him* is faint and languiſhing; while in the mean

time they uſe no endeavour to bend and direct their thoughts towards him, do make as idle a complaint, as he that ſhall ſay, he is in a miſerable ſtarving condition, and nothing nouriſhes him, who wanting nothing ſutable for him, is ſo wretchedly ſlothful, that he will be at no pains to prepare, or ſo much as eat and chew his own neceſſary food. You may not imagine, *you have* all that is needful for the well-governing of your ſpirits in your own hands and power. Nor ought you therefore to think, that what is ſimply needful *is not to be had.* God is not behind-hand with you; He is no ſuch hard task-maſter, as to require Brick and allow no Straw: But may moſt righteouſly ſay, *ye are idle*, and do therefore only complain like the ſluggard in his bed, whoſe hands cannot endure to labour. You dare not deliberately go to God, and tell him, you do all you can to fix the thoughts of your hearts on him, and yet it will not be; or that he gives you no help. Though he can be no way indebted to you, but by his own free promiſe; He giveth *meat to them that fear him, being ever mindful of his Covenant*, (yea he doth it for Ravens and Sparrows); He will not then famiſh the Souls that cry to him, and wait on him; *Their heart ſhall live that ſeek God.* It's becoming and ſutable to the ſtate of things between him and you, that he ſhould put you upon *ſeeking that you may find.* Your reaſonable nature and faculties (eſpecially being already rectified in ſome meaſure, and enlivened by his Grace and Spi-

Spirit) do require to be held to ſuch terms. It is natural to you *to think*; and there is nothing more ſutable to the new creature, than that you apply and ſet your ſelves to *think on him*, and that your thoughts be ſet (and held) on work to enquire and ſeek him out. Know therefore, you do not your parts, unleſs you make this more your buſineſs: Therefore to be here more particular;

1. *Solemnly ſet your ſelves at choſen times to think on God.* Meditation is of it ſelf a diſtinct Duty, and muſt have a conſiderable time allow'd it among the other exerciſes of the Chriſtian Life. It challenges a juſt ſhare and part in the time of our Lives; and he in whom we are to place our *delight*, is, you know, the prime and chief Object of this holy Work. Is it reaſonable that he who is our Life, and our All, ſhould never be thought on, but now and then, as it were by chance, and on the by? *My meditation on him ſhall be ſweet.* Doth not that imply that it was with the Pſalmiſt a deſigned thing to meditate on God? that it was a ſtated courſe? whereas it was become cuſtomary and uſual to him, his ordinary practice to appoint times for meditating on God, his well-known exerciſe, (which is ſuppoſed) he promiſes himſelf ſatisfaction and ſolace of ſoul herein.

Let your eyes herein therefore prevent the Night-watches. Reckon you have neglected one of the moſt important buſineſſes of the day, if you have omitted this, and that to ſuch omiſſions you ow your little *delight in God*:

Wherein therefore are you to repair your ſelves but by redreſſing this great neglect?

2. *Think often of him amidſt your other affairs. Every one as he is called* (be his ſtate or way of living what it will, be he bond or free) is required *therein* to *abide with God.* And how is that but by often thinking of him, as being a great part (and fundamental to all the reſt) of what can be meant *by this abode?* How grateful a mixture would the thoughts of God make with that great variety of *other things* which we are neceſſarily to be concern'd in, while we are in this world! If they be ſerious and right thoughts they will be accompanied with *ſome* ſavour and reliſh of ſweetneſs, and at leaſt, tend to keep the heart in a diſpoſition for more *delightful* ſolemn intercourſes *with God.*

1 Cor. 7.

It is a ſad Truth (than which alſo nothing is more apparent) that whatſoever there is, either of ſinfulneſs or uncomfortableneſs in the lives of thoſe who have engaged and devoted themſelves to God, doth in greateſt part proceed from their neglect to *mind God.* A thing, if due heed were taken about it, ſo eaſie, ſo little laborious, and the labour whereof (ſo much as it is) were ſure to be recompenc't with ſo unſpeakable pleaſure; that they are ſo often loſt in darkneſs, drown'd in carnality, buried in earthlineſs, and overwhelmed with miſeries and deſolations of ſpirit, and all this for want of a right employing of their thoughts, is from hence only; They ſet their thoughts upon things

things that tend either to corrupt and deprave their ſpirits, or to diſquiet and afflict them.

At this in-let, and by the labour of their own thoughts, ſins and calamities are brought in upon them as a flood; which very thoughts if they were plac't and exerciſed aright, would let in God upon them, fill them with his fulneſs, repleniſh their Souls with his light, grace, and conſolations. And how much more eaſie an exerciſe were it to keep their thoughts imployed upon *one object* that is ever full, *delectable* and preſent; than to divide them *among many*, that *either lie remote*, and out of their power, to be purſued with anxiety, toil, and very often with diſappointment; Or, *being nearer hand*, are to be *enjoyed* (if they be things that have an appearance of good in them) with much danger and damage to their ſpirits, and with little ſatisfaction; or (if they appear evil) to be *endured* with pain and ſorrow! So that the *labour* of their thoughts, among thoſe many things, brings them in torture, when their *Reſt* upon God alone, would be all pleaſure, Pſal.25.13
delight and joy: Here their ſouls might dwell at eaſe or (as thoſe words import) *reſt in goodneſs* (even with that quiet repoſe which men are wont to take by night; for ſo the word we read *Dwell* peculiarly ſignifies, after the wearineſs which we may ſuppoſe to have been contracted by the labour of the foregoing day.

And if no ſuch ſweet and pleaſant fruit were to be hoped for from the careful government and ordering of our thoughts, Is

the obligation of Gods Law in this matter nothing with us? whom we are bound to fear, and love, to truſt and obey above all things, of him are we not bound ſo much as to think? And what is *loving God with all our mind*, ſo expreſly mentioned in *that great ſummary* of our duty towards him? Or what can it mean, after the required love of all the heart, and all the ſoul, to add ſo particularly, and *with all thy mind*, when-as the mind we know is not the ſeat of love? Surely it cannot at leaſt, but imply, that our thoughts muſt be much exerciſed upon God even by the direction of our Love, and that our Love muſt be maintain'd by thoughts of him; That our minds and hearts muſt continually correſpond and concur to the *loving of God*; and ſo our whole ſoul be exerciſed and ſet on work therein.

Eccl. 12. 1. What doth it mean that our Youth is challenged to the remembrance of him? What, is our riper Age more exempt? Do we as we longer live by him ow him leſs? Doth it ſignifie nothing with us that (as was hinted formerly) the wicked bear this brand in the Scriptures, Pſal. 9. 16. *They that forget God.* That it is a differencing character of his own people, That *they thought on his Name?* Why do we ſuppoſe our thoughts exempt from his Government, or the obligation of his Laws? Why ſhould it be reckoned leſs inſolent to ſay *our thoughts*, than *our tongues* are *our own, who is Lord over us?* May we do what we will with our thoughts? Who gave us our thinking power,

or

or made us capable of forming a thought? And now, Will we aſſume the confidence to tell God we think on him all that we can? How many idle thoughts in the day might we have exchang'd for thoughts of God! and every thought have been to us a ſpring of pleaſure, and holy *delight in him!* Know then that if ever you will do any thing in this great matter of *delighting in God*, you muſt arreſt your thoughts for him, and engage them in more conſtant converſe with him: And withal mix prayers with thoſe thoughts; or let them often be praying, craving thoughts, ſuch as may carry with them annexed deſires; or wherein your heart may breath out requeſts, ſuch as that (for inſtance) *Rejoice the Soul of thy Servant; For unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my ſoul*, &c. See they be ſpiritful thoughts that carry life in them, and aim to draw more. Pſal. 86. 4.

But now our thoughts may be converſant about him under very various conſiderations, and all of them very *delightful.* And this variety may much increaſe our *delight*, while our minds converſe with him, now under one notion, then under another. They are apt to tire and grow weary, being long imployed the ſame way upon the ſame thing. And it were an injury to the bleſſed God himſelf, when he preſents himſelf under various aſpects and appearances, ſo to take notice of any one, as to overlook and neglect the reſt. Therefore,

4. *Look often to him according as abſolutely conſi-*

conſidered he is in himſelf the moſt excellent Being; and as in reference to his creatures, he is the Supream Author and Lord of all.

There is an unſpeakable pleaſure to be taken in him ſo beheld. Too many while their diſtruſt, or their carnality and ſtrangeneſs to God holds them in ſuſpence concerning their own ſpecial relation to him, are apt to fancy themſelves excuſed of *delighting in him*: It belongs not to them they think, but to ſome familiar friends, and great favourites of his to whom he expreſſes ſpecial kindneſs, and on whom he places the marks of his more peculiar good-will. But do you think ſo to ſhift and wave the obligation of an univerſal Law upon mankind, and all reaſonable nature? You are to remember (as hath been ſaid) your *delight in God* is not to be conſidered only as your priviledg, but as an act of homage to him that made you, and put an intelligent apprehenſive ſpirit into you, by which you are capable of knowing who made you, and of beholding your Makers excellency with admiration and *delight*. And if now you are become guilty and vile; Will you run into darkneſs and hide your ſelves from him, or cloſe your eyes, and then ſay, the Sun doth not ſhine, and deny the bleſſed glorious God to be what moſt truly and unchangeably he is? What-ever you are or have deſired he ſhould be towards you, yet do *him* right. Behold and confeſs his glorious excellency, every way moſt worthy to be *delighted in*. Nor have you rendered your ſelves ſo vile,

nor

nor had ſo much cauſe of apprehending his diſpleaſure towards you, by any thing ſo much as this, *Your not having taken delight in him all this while*; and your neglect to take the ways (ſpoken of before) tending to bring you thereto. If you think you have no ſpecial relation to him, Do you think you ever ſhall if you continue, in the temper of your ſpirits, ſtrangers to him, and look upon him as one in whom you are to take no *delight*? Surely 'tis your dutiful affection towards him and complacency in him, that muſt give you ground to hope you are his, and he is yours; And therefore the beginnings and firſt degrees of that complacency and *delight* muſt be in you before; being begotten by the view of that excellency which he hath in himſelf antecedently to his being related to you.

Yea, and if your relation to him were already as ſure and evident to you as can be ſuppoſed; yet are you to take heed of confining your *delight in him* to that conſideration of him only; or of making it the chief reaſon of that your *delight*. For ſo your *delight in him* will be more for your own ſakes, or upon your own account than his. Learn to look upon things as they are, and not according to their aſpect upon your affairs. Is it not a greater thing that *he is God*, than that *he is yours?*

It is a purer, a more noble and generous affection to him you are to aim at, than what is meaſured only by your private intereſt. Is that

that boundleſs fulneſs of life, glory, and all perfection (treaſured up in the eternal and incomprehenſible Being) to be all eſtimated by the capacity and concerns of a ſilly worm? That conſideration, therefore, being ſometimes laid aſide, ſit down and contemplate God as he is in himſelf, not *diſowning* (as it is not fit you ſhould) but only *waving* the preſent conſideration of any more comfortable relation, wherein you may (though moſt juſtly) ſuppoſe him to ſtand to *you*; and ſee if you cannot take pleaſure in this, that he is great and glorious, and to have a being ſo every way perfect before your eyes. Try if it will not be pleaſant to you to fall down before him, and give him Glory; To join your Praiſes and triumphant Songs to thoſe of Saints and Angels: And how much yet alſo it will add to your ſatisfaction to behold and acknowledg him exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe. How great *delight* hath been taken in him upon ſuch accounts! In what tranſports have holy ſouls been upon the view and contemplation of his Sovereign Power and Dominion; his wiſe and righteous Government; his large and flowing Goodneſs, that extends in common to all the Works of his hands! Labour to imitate the ingenuous and loyal affection of this kind, whereof you find many expreſſions in the ſacred Volume. For what hath been matter of *delight* to Saints of old, ought ſurely ſtill as much to be accounted ſo. To give inſtances.

You ſometimes find them in a moſt compla-

placential adoration of his wonderful Wiſdom and Counſels. *O the depths of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledg of God! How unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!* And again, *To God only wiſe be glory, through Jeſus Chriſt for ever. Amen.* Rom. 11. 33. Ch. 16. 27.

To the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the only wiſe God be honour and glory for ever, &c. 1 Tim. 1: 17.

To the only wiſe God our Saviour be Glory and Majeſty, Dominion and Power now and ever, &c. Jude 25.

Elſewhere we have them in tranſports admiring his Holineſs. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods! Who is like thee glorious in Holineſs! There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none beſides thee, neither is there any rock like our God!* And this is recommended and enjoined to his holy Ones as the ſpecial matter of their joy and praiſe: *Rejoice in the Lord ye Righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holineſs.* Exod. 15. 11. 1 Sam. 2. 2 Pſal. 97. 12

At other times we have their magnificent Celebrations of his Glorious Power, and that by way of Triumph over the Paganiſh gods; *Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed. Their Idols are ſilver and gold,* &c. *Be thou exalted, O God, in thine own ſtrength. We will ſing and praiſe thy power. Forſake me not until I have ſhewed thy ſtrength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come, &c.* This is given out as the Song of *Moſes* and the *Lamb, Who ſhall not fear* Pſal. 115. Pſal. 21. 13 Pſal. 71. 18

fear thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy name? Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, &c.

And how do they magnifie his Mercy and Goodneſs both towards his own people, and his creatures in general. *O how great is thy goodneſs which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee, that thou haſt wrought for them that truſt in thee before the children of men! Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praiſe is comely for the upright: Praiſe the Lord with harp: Sing unto him with the Pſaltery,---The earth is full of the goodneſs of the Lord. I will extol thee my God, O King, I will bleſs thy name for ever and ever. Men ſhall ſpeak of the might of thy terrible acts, they ſhall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodneſs, and ſhall ſing of thy righteouſneſs. The Lord is gracious and full of compaſſion, ſlow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* To inſert all that might be mentioned to this purpoſe, were to tranſcribe a great part of the Bible.

Pſal. 31. 19

Pſal. 33. 1. &c.

Pſal. 145. 1, &c.

And in what raptures do we often find them, in the contemplation of his *Faithfulneſs* and *Truth*, his *Juſtice* and *Righteouſneſs*, his *Eternity*, the boundleſneſs of his Preſence, the greatneſs of his Works, the extenſiveneſs of his Dominion, the perpetuity of his Kingdom, the exactneſs of his Government; *Who is a ſtrong God like unto thee, and to thy faithfulneſs round about thee! Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulneſs reaches unto the clouds. Before the mountains were brought forth*

Pſal. 69.

Pſal. 36.

forth, or ever thou hadſt formed the earth, or the world, from everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God. Pſal. 90. 2.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? *Behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.* 1 Kings 8: *The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of them that have pleaſure therein. His work is honourable and glorious, &c.* Pſal. 111. *All thy works ſhall praiſe thee, O Lord, and thy Saints ſhall bleſs thee; they ſhall ſpeak of the glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy power.* Pſal. 145: *To make known to the ſons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious Majeſty of his Kingdom. Thy Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom, and thy Dominion endureth throughout all generations.*

And his Glory in the general (which reſults from his ſeveral Excellencies in conjunction), How loftily is it often celebrated with the expreſſion of the moſt loyal deſires that it may be every-where renowned, and of greateſt complacency, in as far as it is apprehended ſo to be. *The glory of the Lord ſhall endure for ever.* Pſal. 104. 31. *They ſhall ſing in the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.* Pſal. 138. 5. *Be thou exalted above the heavens, let thy glory be above all the earth.* Pſal. 57. 7, 11. *Let them praiſe the name of the Lord, for his name alone is excellent, his glory is above the earth and the heavens.* Pſal. 148. 13. When you read ſuch paſſages as theſe (whether they be elogies or commendations of him, or doxologies and direct attributions of glory to him), you are to bethink your ſelves, with what temper of heart theſe things were uttered! with

with how raiſed and exalted a ſpirit! what high delight and pleaſure was conceived in glorifying God, or in beholding him glorious! How large and unbounded a heart, and how full of his praiſe doth ſtill every where diſcover it ſelf in ſuch ſtrains; When all Nations, when all Creatures, when every-thing that hath breath, when Heaven and Earth are invited together, to join in the conſort, and bear a part in his praiſes! And now eye him under the ſame notions under which you have ſeen him ſo magnified, that in the ſame way you may have your own heart wrought up to the ſame pitch and temper towards him. Should it not provoke an emulation, and make you covet to be amidſt the throng of loyal and devoted Souls, when you ſee them aſcending as if they were all incenſe! When you behold them diſſolving and melting away in delight and love, and ready to expire, even fainting that they can do no more; deſigning their very laſt breath ſhall go forth in the cloſe of a Song! (*I will ſing unto the Lord, as long as I live, I will ſing praiſe to my God while I have my being!*) How becoming is it, to reſolve, *This ſhall be my aim and ambition, to fly the ſame, and if it were poſſible, a greater height.* Read over ſuch Pſalms as are more eſpecially deſigned for the magnifying of God; and when you ſee what were the things that were moſt taking to ſo ſpiritual and pious hearts; thence receive inſtruction, and aim to have your hearts alike affected and tranſported with the

Pſal. 104: 33.

Pſal. 8, 48, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, &c.

the ſame things. Frame the ſuppoſition, that you are meant, that the invitation is directed to you, *O Come let us ſing unto the Lord, let us come before his preſence with thankſgiving, and make a joyful noiſe to him with Pſalms; for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods*, &c. And think with your ſelves, Is he not as great as he was? Is he not as much our Maker as he was theirs? Is it not now as true, that *the Lord reigneth, and is high above all the earth, and exalted far above all gods?* Now ſince theſe were the conſiderations upon which ſo great complacency was taken in him, ſet the ſame before your own eyes. And ſince theſe were propoſed as the matter of ſo common a joy, and the Creation ſeems deſign'd for a muſical inſtrument of as many ſtrings as there are Creatures in Heaven and Earth; Awake, and make haſte to get your heart fixed: Leſt *the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad, the world and all that dwell therein:* Leſt *the ſea roar, and the fulneſs thereof, the floods clap their hands, the fields and the hills be joyful together, and all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord*, while you only are ſilent and unconcern'd.

And ſeriouſly conſider the *kind* and *nature* of that *joy* and *delight in God* wherewith the hearts of holy men did ſo exceedingly abound; Which is to be collected from the expreſſed ground and reaſons of it, for the moſt part, whereſoever you have any diſcovery of that joy it ſelf; This general and principal character may be given of it, that it was a

ſincerely-devout and a loyal joy; not a mean, narrow, ſelfiſh pleaſure, an hugging of themſelves in this apprehenſion meerly, *It is well with me*, or *I am ſafe and happy whatſoever becomes of the world.* This was ſtill the burden of their Song; *The Lord is great, and glorious, and excellent is exalted; and moſt high over all.* And it is to be obſerved, that as this was the common and more uſual ſtrain and temper of holy Souls, in the ages whereof the Scriptures give us any account; ſo were doubts, and fears, and troubled thoughts concerning their own intereſt in God, a great deal leſs uſual and common in thoſe days. So that in proportion to the other pious and holy exerciſes of ſuch as were true fearers of God and devoted to him, there is little account given us of any thing of that kind in the ſacred Writings, and eſpecially in the New Teſtament of our Lord. An argument, That ſuch as were ſincerely religious were moſt taken up about the intereſt of God and Chriſt in the world, rejoicing either in the obſervation of its growth and increaſe, or in the hope and confidence that it ſhall grow: And that they were much leſs concerned about their own intereſt; yea and that this courſe did thrive beſt with them. While they were moſt intent upon the affairs of their common Lord, their own were well enough provided for.

We cannot hereupon but note therefore by the way, how altered a thing Religion is now become. Almoſt the whole buſineſs of it,

it, even among them that more ſeriouſly mind any thing belonging to it, is a *fear of going to Hell*; and hence perpetual endleſs ſcruples, doubts and enquiries about marks and ſigns, and how to know what is the leaſt degree of that grace which is neceſſary to their being ſaved. As if the intention were to beat down the price to the very loweſt, and dodge always, and cheapen heaven to the utmoſt, it may be feared (as too many) with a deſign not to aim at any thing higher than what is meerly neceſſary to that purpoſe only, and never to mind being excellent, but only being ſaved.

And yet alſo it were well, in a comparative ſenſe, if that it ſelf were minded in good earneſt by many that profeſs beyond the common rate; And That whereas their own intereſt is the thing they moſt mind, it were not their meaneſt and leaſt conſiderable intereſt, even that of their ſenſe, and fleſh, and ſecular advantage; and that under the pretence too (which makes the matter ſo much the worſe) of much love and zeal Godward, and devotedneſs to his intereſt; which they ſuppoſed involved and wrapt up wholly with theirs. Whence alſo all their *delight* and *joy* is meaſured only by the aſpect of the world, and of *publick affairs* upon them and *their private ones*: And they are either overwhelmed with ſorrow, or tranſported with joy, according as the ſtate of things doth either frown upon, or favour their concernments. In the days when the intereſt of Chriſt lay more entirely

and undividedly among one ſort of men; and more apparently, their conteſts being leſs among themſelves, and chiefly with the Infidel world; and they had, for the moſt part, no enemies but thoſe in common of the Chriſtian Name and Cauſe: So that any common ſtate of ſuffering to them, was the viſible prejudice of that Cauſe and Intereſt:

Why, what, Did they *delight* and *pleaſe* themſelves in nothing but a warm Sun and *Halcyon*-ſeaſons? Surely they had matter little enough for that ſort of joy. And what, Did they therefore dejectedly languiſh and deſpond, and give themſelves up to ſorrow and deſpair? Nor that neither; unleſs they had all had but one neck, and that alſo perfectly in the enemies power, it had been an impoſſible thing to ſtifle and extinguiſh their *delight* and *joy:* So fully did Chriſt make it good to them, That *their ſorrow ſhould be turned into joy, and their joy ſhould no man take from them.* For even that increaſed it which aim'd at it's ſuppreſſion; and the waters thrown upon their flame, became rivers of oyl. They had got a ſecret way of *rejoicing in tribulation*, of *counting it all joy when they fell into divers tentations*, of *taking pleaſure in reproaches for the ſake of Chriſt*, of turning difficulties and hazards into matter of triumph, of *taking joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods*, and glorying to be *counted worthy to ſuffer* any thing for ſo excellent a *name.* Inſomuch, that though their Head and Lord was in a moſt ignominious way taken from them, and they left

left as a deſpiſed party of men in the midſt of an outragious world, under the (ſeemingly-hopeleſs) profeſſion of addictedneſs to the intereſt of a Man that dy'd upon a Croſs among Thieves but the other day: And though many of them never ſaw his face, but had their knowledg of him by report and hear-ſay, yet *believing they rejoic'd, with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* The matter and ground of their *joy* was not ſo uncertain and changeable a thing, nor ſo light and unſubſtantial as the worlds kindneſs and favour, and the ſmooth face of a ſerene Sky. *Theſe* were *true Lovers* of Chriſt; and ſuch as counted him worthy for whom they ſhould do all that lay in their power, and ſuffer all which it was in the power of any others to do againſt them upon his account. 1 Pet. 1. 8.

They that rejoice and place their *delight* in the bleſſed God himſelf through Jeſus Chriſt, have for the Object of their joy the *Everlaſting I AM*, Him *who is the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever.* And whoſe excellent glory may be clouded indeed and eclips'd to the world and the eye of Senſe; but ſtill ſhines in it ſelf, and to the eye of Faith, with the ſame bright and undiminiſh'd luſtre.

That *delight* will then be continued and permanent, and ever ſpringing up in freſh livelineſs and vigour, which is taken in this bleſſed Object, conſidered as it is in it ſelf; and that hath place in a Soul that acts in a ſteady *direct* courſe towards that Object,

without ſiniſter reſpects, or any ſelfiſh ones, of even the higheſt kind, otherwiſe than in that ſubordination which will be ſutable to the vaſt diſproportion and inequality between Gods intereſt and ours; that is, (looking upon our own external concernments as unworthy to be named in the ſame day), That though we reckon what there is delectable in God will make for our eternal advantage; yet to conſider that advantage of ours ſo much leſs, and to be ſo much more pleaſed and ſatisfy'd, that he is in himſelf bleſſed and glorious, as it is in it ſelf a thing more conſiderable that he be ſo, than it is what becomes of us, or of any creature, or of this whole Creation. We are not indeed concern'd, nor may think it warrantable to put our ſelves upon any ſuch ſevere and unnatural trials of our love and fidelity to him, as to put the queſtion to our own hearts, Could we be content to lye in Hell, or be in the ſtate of the damned for ever for his Glory? For it were a moſt injurious and vile ſuppoſition of ſomewhat inconſiſtent with his own moſt bleſſed Nature, and eternal, eſſential felicity, (for his happineſs cannot but be much placed in the benignity of his Nature), to imagine that ever he can be pleaſed, or eſteem himſelf glorify'd by the everlaſting miſeries of any one that truly loves him. We ought to abhor the mention or imagination of ſuch a thing as a blaſphemy againſt his infinite goodneſs; the denial whereof were to deny his Godhead. And it were alſo an abſurd and

ſelf-

ſelf-contradicting ſuppoſition: For none can be in the ſtate of the damned, but they muſt be alſo in a ſtate of extream enmity to God, and of all wickedneſs and malignity arrived and grown up to its higheſt pitch; Which indeed is the very horrour, and inmoſt center of Hell: Wickedneſs and eternal miſery differing (for the moſt part) but in degree, as grace and glory do. So that to put our ſelves upon this trial of ſincerity towards God, were to ask ourſelves, Whether we would be willing to expreſs our ſincere love to God, by everlaſting hatred of him; and the Truth of our grace by being as maliciouſly wicked as the Devil and his Angels? The expreſſions of *Moſes* and *Paul* ſo frequently alledged can be wiredrawn to no ſuch ſenſe. This is no place to diſcuſs the importance of them. But it were certainly moſt imprudent (whatſoever they import) to ſeek marks of ſincere love to God thence, which may be fetcht from ſo many plain texts of Scripture. But it is out of queſtion that we may and ought to mind and take complacency in our own bleſſedneſs, in a degree inferior and ſubordinate to that which we take in the glory of the bleſſed God, without making the ſinful and abſurd ſuppoſition of their inconſiſtency: Or that we can ever be put to chooſe the abſence or privation of the one as a means to the other. And ſuch complacency and delight in God as ariſes upon ſuch grounds is of the right ſtamp and kind.

See then that yours be a well-complexion'd

ion'd delight, and ſuch as inwardly partakes of the true nature of Religion *i. e.* that hath in it entire *devotedneſs to God* as the very life, Soul, ſpirit of it: And if this be not the thing but meerly ſelf-ſatisfaction which you chiefly have in purſuit under the name of delight in God; you beat the air, and do but hunt after a ſhadow. For there is no ſuch thing as real ſolid delight in God any-where exiſting, or ever will be, ſeparately and apart from a ſupream love and addictedneſs of heart to him and his intereſt as our chief and utmoſt end. Which temper of ſpirit towards him, muſt be maintained and improved, by our fixed intuition and view of his glorious greatneſs, and abſolute excellency and perfection; and the congruity and fitneſs which we thereupon apprehend, that we and all things, (as all are of him) ſhould be wholly to him, that he alone may have the glory.

5. And though you are not to *prefer* the conſideration of your own intereſt in God as *a good ſuitable to you*, or to give it the higheſt place in your *delight*; *yet alſo you muſt take heed of neglecting it, or of denying it any place at all.* For though we may plainly obſerve, as hath been ſaid, That it was the uſual temper of holy Men of Old, to be *moſt taken* up in admiring God upon the account of his own Excellency and Glory in it ſelf conſidered; and may thence collect *that* to be the genuine right temper of a gracious heart when it is moſt it ſelf: Yet alſo 'tis as evident, That they were far from *neglecting* their own intereſt in God,

God, and that they counted it not a ſmall matter; Yea, that it had (though not the principal) a very great influence upon their *delight* and *joy in him.* No one can read the Bible, and not have frequent occaſion to take notice of this. For how often do we find him ſpoken of under the names of their *Portion, Heritage,* &c! And in what rapturesof Joy do we often find them upon that account! So the Pſalmiſt conſiders him, when he ſays, *The lines are fallen to him in pleaſant places, and he had a goodly heritage.* Pſal. 16. How often do we find them glorying in their relation by Covenant, and making their boaſts of him as *their God; I will love thee, O Lord, my ſtrength,* &c! Pſal. 18. You have [*my*] no leſs than nine times repeated in the beginning (the firſt and ſecond verſes) of that Pſalm, *My ſtrength, my rock, my fortreſs, my deliverer, my God,* &c. And afterwards How glorious a triumph is there raiſed, and in what exultation do we behold them upon this! *Who is God ſave the Lord,* and who is a Rock *ſave our God?* And again, *The Lord liveth and bleſſed be my Rock, and let the God of my Salvation be exalted.* And this was ſome of the laſt holy breath uttered by that anointed one of the God of *Jacob,* and the ſweet Pſalmiſt of *Iſrael*; *He hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant ordered in all things and ſure.* 2 Sam. 23. And this is all my Salvation and all my Deſire -- With this, How well ſatisfied and pleaſed did he expire, and go down to the grave! And the People of God are ſometime repreſented as ſo taken with this apprehenſion v. 31.

henſion of their peculiar relation to God that they cannot be content to *know*, but they *proclaim* it; nor was it enough the preſent age ſhould know, but they muſt have it told the following generation; *Let Mount Sion rejoice,*
Pſal. 48. &c. Mark-- *That ye may tell the generation following --- For this God is our God.* See their oſtentation of him, *This God!* q. d. Behold what a God have we! View him well, and take notice how glorious a God he is. And as they glory in the greatneſs of the God to whom they were related, ſo they do in the eternity of the relation. This God is our God *for ever and ever!* &c. And how unexpreſſible was the inward pleaſure wherewith we may ſuppoſe thoſe words to have been
Pſal. 67. 6. uttered, *God even our own God ſhall bleſs us!* How *delightful* an appropriation! as if it were intended to be ſaid, The bleſſing it ſelf were leſs ſignificant, it could not have that ſavour with it if it were not from *our own God.* Not only therefore *allow* but *urge* your ſpirits thus to look towards God, that you may both *delight in him, as being in himſelf the moſt excellent one*, & alſo as *being yours*; for know, you are not *permitted* only, but *obliged* to eye, accept and rejoice in him as ſuch. It is his firſt and great Law, and the form of his Covenant which he requires you to enter into with him, *To take him for your God.* Herein to be ſhie and decline, is to *rebel.* And when he offers himſelf in all his rich fulneſs to be your Portion and your God, How *vile ingratitude* were it to neglect and overlook the kind-

kindneſs of the overture. It is his glory to have indigent ſouls ſatiating themſelves in him, drawing from him their vital breath, living upon him as their All: Confeſſing they cannot live, but by his vouchſafed communications. And if you ſhould ſay you love him, but *ſo he be ever glorious in himſelf, you care not to be happy*; It would ſound like an hollow complement. You are not to deal with *a God* upon ſuch terms. It becomes you not, nor is ſutable to him. It is fit for you to own it to him, that he is your *Life*, that you are a *meer nothing* in your ſelf, and muſt ſeek your All in him. Your *Song* and your *Prayer* muſt be directed to him *as the God of your life*. Pſal. 42. 8. You do not own him *as God*, except you own and adore him as your all-ſufficient Good, and that fulneſs which filleth all in all. You detract from the glory of his Godhead, if you attribute not this to him; And if accordingly, as one that cannot live without him, you do not ſeek union with him, and joyn your ſelf to him, and then rejoyce and ſolace your ſelf in that bleſſed conjunction.

And if you be not ſure as yet that he is yours, your delighting in him is not therefore to be ſuſpended and delayed till you be. But in the mean time delight in him as *willing to become yours*. To disbeleive that he is willing, is to give him *the lye*. It is the great deſign of his Goſpel ſo to repreſent him to you. See that your hearts do embrace and cloſe with that as a moſt delightful and lovely repreſentation: *The great and glo-*

glorious Lord of heaven and earth offering himſelf in all his fulneſs to be thine! Thy portion and thy God for ever! How tranſporting ſhould this be to you! Nor, if you ſuſpect the ſincerity of your own heart towards him (which is the only thing you can have any pretence to ſuſpect, for it were a blaſphemy to his Truth and Goodneſs to intimate a ſuſpicious thought *of him*) may you therefore ſpend all your time in anxious enquiries, or in looking only upon your own evil heart: But look moſt, and with a direct and ſteady eye towards him. Behold and view well his glory and his love, that by this means your heart may be captivated and more entirely won to him.

This makes delight in God a ſtrange thing in the hearts and practice of many. They find too much cauſe of complaint concerning their own hearts, that they are diſaffected, and diſenclin'd Godward. And what is the courſe they take hereupon? Their Religion is nothing but complaint. And all their days are ſpent in beholding that they are bad, without ever taking the way to become better. They conclude their caſe to be evil and full of danger, becauſe they find they can take no delight in God: And they will take no delight in him becauſe they have that apprehenſion of the danger of their caſe. And ſo their not-delighting in God reſolves into it ſelf. And they delight not in him becauſe they delight not in him. Tis ſtrange the abſurdity of this is not more reflected on.

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And what now is to be done in this caſe? To reſt here is to be held in a circle of ſin and miſery all your days: And would ſignify as if delighting in God were a ſimple impoſſibility, or as if not to delight in God, were a thing ſo highly rational as to be its own ſufficient ſelf-juſtification; And that it were reaſon enough not to delight in him becauſe we do not. There can be no other way to be taken but to behold him more in that diſcovery of him which his Goſpel ſets before your eyes, and in that way ſeek to have your hearts taken with his amiableneſs and love, and allured to delight in him. And labour in this way to have that delight increaſed to that degree, that it may ceaſe to be a queſtion or doubt with you, *Do I delight in God or no?* Whence when you reflect and find that you do; Then ſhall you have that additional matter of further delight; That whereas you before took delight in him becauſe being in himſelf ſo excellent a one he hath freely offered himſelf to you to become yours; You may now delight in him alſo, becauſe you are ſure he is ſo: Whereof you cannot have a more ſatisfying aſſurance than from his ſo expreſs ſaying, *I Love them that Love me*; and *we love him becauſe he loved us firſt.* 1 John 4. Prov. 8.

6. Take eſpecial heed of more apparent and groſſer tranſgreſſions. Nor account your ſecurity from the danger of them ſo much to ſtand in your being ordinarily out of the way of temptations to them, as in an habitual frame of holineſs,

and

and the ſettled averſion of your heart to them. Endeavour a growing conformity to God in the temper of your ſpirit, and to be in Love with purity; That your heart may no more endure an impure thought, than you would fire in your boſom. If you be herein careleſs and remiſs, and ſuffer your heart to grow diſſolute, or more bold and adventurous, in admitting ſinful cogitations; Or if you have more liking or leſs diſlike of any wicked courſe wherein others take their liberty, you are approaching the borders of a dangerous precipice. And if ſome greater breach hereupon enſue between God and you, what becomes of your delight in him? A ſad interruption of ſuch pleaſant intercourſe cannot but follow, both on his part, and on yours.

On his part, a ſuſpenſion and reſtraint of thoſe communications of light and grace which are neceſſary to your delight in him. He will be juſt in his way of dealing towards thoſe of his own family, as well as merciful. It appears how much *David*'s delight in God was intermitted, upon his great tranſgreſſion, through Gods withdrawing from him, when
Pſal. 51.12 he prays he would *reſtore the joy of his ſalvation.*

And *on your part*, will inſue both *leſs liking* of Gods preſence, and a *dread* of it: Your inclination will not be towards him as before; though the act of ſin be ſoon over, the effect will remain; even a carnal frame of ſpirit that diſaffects converſe with God, and cares not

not to come nigh him. And if that were not, a guilty fear would hold you off; ſo that if you were *willing*, you would not *dare* to approach him: Your liberty taken to ſin would ſoon infer a bondage upon your ſpirit God-ward, unleſs conſcience be wholly aſleep; and you have learned a ſtupid inſolent confidence to affront God, which ſurely would ſignifie little to your *delight in him. Thou ſhalt put away iniquity from thy taberna-* Job 22.
cles --- Then ſhalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty; and ſhalt lift up thy face unto God. The conſcience of unpurged iniquity, will not let you lift up your face or appear in that glorious preſence.

7. *Cheriſh the great grace of humility; And be ever mean and low in your own eyes.* That temper carries in it even a natural diſpoſition to *delight in God.* How ſweet complacency will ſuch a Soul take in him! His *light and glory* ſhine with great luſtre in the eyes of ſuch a one while there is not a nearer (imagined) luſtre to vie therewith (Stars are ſeen at noon, by them that deſcend low into a deep pit). They will admire God but little that admire themſelves much. And take little pleaſure in him, who are too much pleaſed with themſelves. And how ſweet a reliſh *have his love and grace* to an humble lowly ſoul, that eſteems it ſelf leſs than the leaſt of his mercies! With what raviſhing *delight*, will Divine mercy be entertain'd, when it is ſo unexpectedly vouchſafed; when this ſhall be the ſenſe of the Soul now caught into the embraces

braces of Gods love, *What I vile creature! impure worm! what, beloved of God!* Expectation, grounded especially upon an opinion of merit, would unspeakably lessen a favour, if it were afforded (as also expected evils seem the less when they come). But the lowly soul, that apprehends desert of nothing but Hell, is surprized and overcome with wonder and *delight*, when the great God expresses kindness towards it. Besides that he more freely communicates himself to such: *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit*, &c. And he looks to such with a design of habitation; Heaven and Earth are not to him so pleasant a dwelling. Down then into the dust, there you are in the fittest place and posture for *delightful* converse with God.

Isa. 66. 1, 2.

8. *Reckon much upon an eternal abode in that presence where is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.* Enjoy by a serious believing foresight the delights of heaven, labour to *rejoyce in hope of the glory of God.* Look beyond this your present state. Confine not your eye and delight to what is now to be enjoyed, but think of what shall be. Set before your eyes the glorious prospect of the blessed God communicating himself to that vast Assembly *of Angels and the spirits of just men made perfect*, in clearest discoveries of his glory, and richest effusions of his goodness. The best appearance of things in this world, *makes but a dull scene* in comparison of this. If you look towards God accor-

according to what now appears of his glory in the frame of the univerſe, and the courſe of his adminiſtrations and government over his Creatures, He hath not, 'tis true, *left himſelf without witneſs.* And you may behold much that would be to you the matter of *delightful* admiration; *If your eye be clear, and can pierce through clouds and darkneſs and a manifold veil.* He hath made this world and is every-where in it, but it knows him not. His light ſhines in darkneſs, that doth not comprehend it. Beams of his glory do every-where break forth, through every Creature, Providence, Law, and Ordinance of his. But much of his glory that ſhines in the Creation is hid by a train of ſecond cauſes, through which few look to the firſt. His Laws men judg of according to their intereſts and inclinations, while the holy glorious Majeſty that enacted them is out of ſight. His work in the world is carried on in a myſtery; His intereſt lives, but is depreſt; They who are moſt devoted to him are ſupported indeed by his inviſible hand, but are, in the mean time, low, for the moſt part, and afflicted. If you now limit and confine your apprehenſions of him to his preſent appearances, the matter of your *delight* is *real*, but much *diminiſh't*: But conceive of him (as your Faith can behold him at a diſtance) in that poſture wherein having ſetled the eternal State of things he will finally ſhew himſelf. Conceive him as having now gathered home all that that have been recovered to him out of the

apoſtacy, and joined them to thoſe numberleſs legions of innocent and pure ſpirits about his throne that never offended: Conceive him as diſpenſing rewards, pouring out bleſſings upon the loyal heads and hearts of them that expreſſed fidelity and duty to him in the time and ſtate of trial and temptation; Letting his Glory ſhine out with bright and direct beams, to ſo many beholding and admiring eyes; Giving forth the full and ſatisfying communications of his *love*, and making Rivers of pleaſure flow perpetually to the repleniſhing the vaſt enlarged capacities, of ſo innumerable a multitude of grateful adoring ſpirits, to whom it is now ſenſibly to be perceived how his fulneſs filleth All in all. Take this view of him; and let your Faith and Hope thus enter into that which is within the veil: And remember there is only *a little time* between you and that bleſſed ſtate; That then you are *to enter into the joy of your Lord*; ſo that the very element and region wherein you are to live for ever, ſhall be nothing elſe but *delight* and *joy*. In this way of believing foreſight, and by this lawful and allowed prepoſſeſſion of future bleſſedneſs, much ſurely would be added to your preſent *delight in God*. Should not the thoughts of him be pleaſant to you from whom you are expecting ſo great things? If your *delight* in him be any at all, upon what you have already found and experienced of his goodneſs; It ſhould be abundantly the more upon what you are by his Word encouraged to look for.

And

And having thus given ſome account in what way *delight in God* is to be exerciſed and improved; It were a charitable hope that there would be little need to propound arguments to perſwade unto it: But it were an hope not grounded upon common experience, which too plainly tells us, that though ſuch directions as theſe are plain and obvious, not unknown to Chriſtians; but only leſs conſidered (whence it was not needleſs here to recommend them), yet *delight in God* obtains little place in the practice of the moſt. There will therefore too probably be ſtill much need of excitation to it.

And yet becauſe it is not *multitude of words* that is likely to do the buſineſs, but the *weight of things*, urged on by a more powerful hand than that of man, and that much may be collected to this purpoſe from what hath been ſaid of the ſinfulneſs of the omiſſion; I ſhall, with great brevity, offer theſe things only to be conſidered.

Is it not a merciful vouchſafement that the holy God allows you to place your *delight* on him, and invites you to it? How much Grace and Love breaths in theſe words, *Delight thy ſelf alſo in the Lord! Truſt* in him was recommended before, and now this being added *alſo*; How plain is it that your eaſe and reſt is the thing deſigned! Is it fit to receive ſo much kindneſs with neglect?

Again, He *delights* in you, I ſpeak to ſuch of whom this may be ſuppoſed. And it is indefinitely ſaid His *delights* were with the ſons Prov. 8.

ſons of men. Think *what he is*, and *what you are*; And at once, both *wonder* and *yield*.

And what elſe have you to *delight* in? what thing will you name, that ſhall ſupply the place of [GOD] or be to you in the ſtead of him?

Moreover, Who ſhould *delight in him* but you? his friends? his ſons? thoſe of his own houſe?

Think what life and vigour it will infuſe into you; and that, *The joy of the Lord will be your ſtrength.* How pleaſantly will you hold on your courſe! and diſcharge all the other Duties of this your preſent ſtate! You muſt ſerve him. Dare you think of throwing off his yoke? How *deſirable* is it then to take *delight in him* whom I muſt ſerve! which only makes that ſervice acceptable to him, and eaſie to my ſelf!

Nehem. 8.

Further, This is a pleaſure none can rob you of; A joy that cannot be taken from you. Other Objects of your *delight* are vaniſhing daily. Neither Men nor Devils can ever hinder your *delighting in God*, if your hearts be ſo enclin'd; And were you never brought to take pleaſure in any perſon or thing to which you had a former averſion; One that had wrong'd you might yet poſſibly win you by after-kindneſs. Give a reaſon why you ſhould be more difficult towards the bleſſed God that never wrong'd you! and whoſe way towards you hath conſtantly imported ſo much good-will!

And

And conſider that your condition on earth is ſuch, as expoſes you to many ſufferings and hardſhips; Which by *your not-delighting in him*, you can never be ſure to *avoid*; (for they are things common to men) but which, *by your delighting in him*, you may be eaſily able to *endure*.

Beſides all this, ſeriouſly conſider, that you muſt die; You can make no ſhift to avoid that. How eaſily tolerable and pleaſant, will it be to think, then, of going to him with whom you have lived in a *delightful* communion before! And how dreadful to appear before him, to whom your own heart ſhall accuſe you to have been (againſt all his importunities and allurements) a diſaffected ſtranger!

To theſe I add the conſideration in the other part of the verſe; *And he ſhall give thee the deſire of thine heart.*

By *Deſire*] it's plain we are to underſtand the *thing deſired* which is uſual.

By *the thing deſired*, we muſt not be ſo unreaſonable as to think is meant, *any thing whatſoever it be*, that, even with the greateſt extravagancy, we may ſet our hearts upon; as worldly poſſeſſions, riches, honours, *&c.* For it were moſt unbecoming that *delight in God* ſhould be ſo mercenary; or be propounded as the price of ſo mean things. Yea, and if the matter were ſo to be underſtood, *delight in God* were a *means* to the attaining of theſe things as the *end*; which were to make

the bleſſed God an inferiour good to theſe. Nor can we ſuppoſe that one who *delights in God* ſhould ever eſteem any reward or recompence *of another kind*, greater than what he finds in this very *delight* it ſelf. And beſides, we are very prone to deſire things that (as the caſe may be) would prove very hurtful to us. If God ſhould gratifie us with every thing we fancy he ſhould many times pleaſe us to our ruine. And do we believe that when he hath won a perſon to place his *delight* and take pleaſure in himſelf, *He will requite him with a miſchief?*

Since then we may not underſtand him to mean *that whatſoever we deſire, if we delight in him, we ſhall have*; We are to enquire further. And it's plain the things that can be ſuppoſed to be deſired by ſuch perſons as are here ſpoken to, muſt be of one of theſe two ſorts: Either *things* of a *ſpiritual nature*, that tend directly to the gratification and advantage of the inward man; Or elſe *external good things*, that make for the ſupport and comfort of this preſent life.

We will ſuppoſe it to be the one or the other of theſe. And ſhall ſhew that whichſoever ſort it be that is deſired, *Delighting in God* doth naturally infer the ſatisfaction (ſome way or other) of ſuch *deſires.*

1. Suppoſing they be ſpiritual good things that are deſired, *Delight in God* is moſt directly the ſatisfaction it ſelf of ſuch deſire. Whatſoever purely ſpiritual good we can de-

ſire

ſire is either *God himſelf*, or *ſomewhat in order to him. If it be God himſelf* we deſire, ſo far as we *delight in him* we *enjoy* him, and have what we would have; And can only *enjoy* him more fully, by more entire and compoſed *reſt* and *delight in him. If it be ſomewhat in order to him*, He is ſtill ſupreamly and ultimately deſired in that very *deſire*; ſo that in *delighting in him*, we have our end, and that upon which this deſire doth laſtly terminate. And now ſhould not this be a great inducement to us to *delight in God*, that hereby our deſires, the motions of our working hearts directed towards him, do immediately find in him a *peaceful and pleaſant reſt*, and turn into a ſatisfying fruition?

2. Suppoſing the things we deſire be thoſe of an inferiour kind; *Delight in God* doth not a little to the ſatisfying of them alſo.

It doth not, as was ſaid, intitle us to the things themſelves we deſire whatever they be, or how unſutable ſoever to us.

But firſt, It moderates theſe deſires, makes them ſober, prudent, and rational, and capable of being ſatisfied with what is fit for us. He that is much habituated to delight in God is not apt to fooliſh extravagant deſires. This is the ſence of ſuch a one, *Not my will Lord, but thine be done.* He may deſire the ſame thing that others do, yet not with the ſame peremptory and precipitant deſire, but with a deſire tempered 1.

with ſubmiſſion, and with a reſerved deference of the matter to the Divine pleaſure: *This thing, Lord, I deſire if thou ſee good.* So that the general object of ſuch a ones deſire is only *that which in the divine eſtimate is fit and good for him:* And though he deſire this or that particular thing, yet not as *it is this thing*, but as ſuppoſing it poſſible this thing may be judged fit for him by the ſupream Wiſdom, whereto he hath refer'd the matter. But if it ſhall be judged otherwiſe; *This thing* falls without the compaſs of the general object of his deſire, and in juſt conſtruction he deſires it not. For he deſires it not *otherwiſe* than on that condition that God ſee it meet for him; And not longer than till he find he does not. In which caſe the ſobriety and ſubmiſſiveneſs of his former deſire, appears in his *cheerful patient want* of the thing which he finds God hath thought fit to deny him. So that even then, his deſire is ſatisfied, that is, It doth not (as often it is with a carnal heart) turn, being croſt, into rage and madneſs; But into a *complacential peace*, and reſt in the Divine will. He is ſatisfied in what God hath thought fit to do. Yea the very thing is done which he would have done: God hath given him his *hearts deſire.* For let the queſtion be put to ſuch a perſon, *Do you deſire ſuch a thing though God judg it will be hurtful to you or unfit for you?* And no doubt he will, not in faint Words that have

have no ſence under them (as almoſt any other man would) but from his very heart and Soul ſay, *No.* And if he deliberate the matter of his own accord, or by any ones enquiry be occaſion'd to do ſo, This will be found the ſence of his heart, (though his deſire hath inclin'd to this or that thing in particular): And this would be his Prayer in ſuch a caſe, *Lord, If thy wiſdom, which is infinitely more than mine, ſee this thing not fit, croſs me, deny me in this deſire of mine.* And *this general deſire* at leaſt, which is the meaſure of the particular one, is ſure to be accompliſht to one that hath God for his delight. For the promiſe is expreſs and cannot fail, *All things ſhall Work together for good, to them that love God.* Rom. 8. 28

And *this love to God*, or *delight in him*, as it entitles ſuch to that his care and concern for them which is expreſt in this promiſe; So it doth *in its own nature* diſpoſe their hearts to an acquieſcence and ſatisfiedneſs therein. For *love to God*, where it is *true*, is *ſupream*, and prevails over all other love to this or that particular good. Whence it cannot be, but, *if this love be in act*, (as, the Text muſt be underſtood to call unto actual and exerciſed delight in God) it muſt ſubdue, and keep the heart ſo far ſubject to the divine good pleaſure, as that its deſire and addictedneſs to this *particular leſſer good* (concerning which there may alſo be

be a juſt and rational doubt whether it will be *now a good to him* yea or no) ſhall never be a matter of controverſy and quarrel with him who is, *unqueſtionably*, the *Supream and univerſal good.* How will that one thought overcome, if ſuch a one ſhall but apprehend God ſaying to him, *Doſt thou love me above all things, and wilt yet contend with me for ſuch a trifle!*

And we may by the way note, That upon this ground *of the dubious mutability of external good things* (which, by circumſtances, may become evil to this or that perſon) As they are not *here*, ſo nor can they be *any-where* the matter of a *general abſolute promiſe*, to be claim'd indefinitely by any ones faith. The nature of the thing refuſes it. For ſuppoſe we, that what *may*, in this or that caſe, become evil or prejudicial to this or that perſon, doth *now* actually *become ſo*, and is the matter of an abſolute promiſe, now claimable by ſuch a perſon, What would follow? *That an evil is now the actual matter of a promiſe!* Than which what can be ſaid or ſuppoſed more abſurd? when nothing can further or otherwiſe be the matter of a promiſe, than *as it is good.* Wherefore that promiſe would, in the ſuppoſed caſe, degenerate (as the matter of it is by the preſent circumſtances varied) and turn into a threatning. Wherefore when that condition or proviſo is not expreſly added

added to a promiſe concerning a temporal good, the very nature of the thing implies (and requires) *it to be underſtood.* For it is not, otherwiſe than as qualifi'd by that condition, any way a promiſe. Now he that is in the preſent exerciſe of delight in God, hath his heart ſo ſet upon God and alienated from earthly things, as that the preſent temper of it bears proportion to the *natural tenor* of ſuch promiſes; And is not otherwiſe than *by the ceſſation of this delight*, liable to the torture of unſatisfied deſire in reference to theſe lower things: *Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom---yet I will rejoyce in the Lord* &c. Hab.3. 17, 18.

And as delight in God doth thus reduce and moderate deſires in reference to any inferior good; ſo that, *if it be with-held*, they admit a ſatisfaction without it, and the want of is eaſily tolerable. So ſecondly, *If it be granted*, Delight in God addes a ſatisfying ſweetneſs to the enjoyment. A lover of God hath another taſte and reliſh, even of earthly good things, than an earthly-minded man can have. He hath that ſweet Savor of the Love of God upon his ſpirit, that imparts a ſweetneſs to all the enjoyments of this World, beyond what ſuch things *in their own nature* have with them. *This makes the righteous mans little, better than the great revenues of many wicked.* Pſal.37.16

Upon

Upon the whole therefore, This is, if duly weighed, a mighty and moſt perſwaſive argument to delight in God. For it imports thus much, which I add for a cloſe to this diſcourſe.

If you place your delight here; You are moſt certainly delivered from the vexation and torment *of unſatisfied deſire.* The motions of your Souls are ſure to end in a pleaſant reſt. Your leſſer deſires will be ſwallowed up in greater, and all in the Divine fulneſs; So that you will now ſay, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is*
Pſal 73. 25. *none on earth I deſire beſides thee.* If you take no delight in God, your own Souls will be a *preſent Hell* to you. And it may be it is not enough conſidered, how much the *future Hell* ſtands alſo in *unſatisfied deſire*; Which deſire (all ſutable Objects being for ever cut off from it) turns wholly to deſpair, rage and torture. And that ravenous appetite, which would be preying upon external Objects that now fail, turns inward, and as an inſatiable Vulture, gnaws everlaſtingly the wretched Soul it ſelf.

And the beginnings of *this Hell* you will now have within you, while you refuſe to *delight in God.* The ſapleſs, earthly vanities upon which your hearts are ſet give you ſome preſent content, which allays your miſery for a little while, and renders it leſs ſenſible to you: But they have nothing

thing in them to anſwer the vaſt deſires of a reaſonable immortal ſpirit. Whereby you certainly doom yourſelves to perpetual diſreſt. For *in theſe falſe vaniſhing ſhadows of goodneſs*, you *cannot* have ſatisfaction, and *in the bleſſed God* you *will not.*

Imprimatur,

Aug. 9. 1674.

C. Smith.

THE END.

THE *Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous*, Opened and further Recommended from the Conſideration of the *Vanity of this Mortal Life*: In two Treatiſes, On *Pſal.* 17.15. & *Pſal.* 89. 47. By the ſame Author.

And are to be ſold at the Ball in St. *Pauls* Church-yard. 1674.